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THE OPERA:

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS.”

An Epic

Où les beaux vers, la danse, la musique,
De cent plaisirs font un plaisir unique.

VOLTAIRE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
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THE OPERA.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

FEW scenes of frivolous recreation afford so brilliant an episode in the monotony of human existence as the Parisian Opera. Presenting a succession of the most complete dramatic illusions, it exhibits at all seasons a sparkling chain—a flowery garland—uniting the willing muses in a single group, whose incantations

———Take the imprisoned soul,
And lap it in Elysium.

To the natives of Paris the Opera presents a strong hold of national pride; to travellers of all nations, a rendezvous of the most varying and exhilarating description.

Pickering
15 Jan 24

It was one night early in the carnival of the present year, that the Duchesse de Montémar and her English friend, Lady Welwyn, took possession of their box to witness a representation of "*Le Dieu et la Bayadère*," with a premeditated intention of flying into ecstasies at the sight of Taglioni's attitudes, and melting into the necessary rapture of enthusiasm at the sound of Nourrit's voice; even though the attention of the one was riveted by the languid whispers of Count Ugo Pignatelli, and the admiration of the other lavished on the flippant sallies of the Chevalier de Villevargues. The Duchess had no ears but for the thrice-told tale of the young Neapolitan's drowsy homage;—Lady Welwyn no eyes, save for the affectation of the Chevalier, a sort of half-English, half-Parisian exquisite, who was just then wrapped in a luxurious reverie on the taste and fancy displayed in the last of his three hundred and sixty-five waistcoats. He smiled and bowed, and prated as usual; but a solitary idea had possessed itself of his empty brain.

"And why were you not at Madame de Cha-

teau Roche's ball last night?" inquired the Count, addressing himself to Lady Welwyn.

"I was ill—or cross—or philosophical; out of sorts, or out of health," sighed the fantastical beauty.

"Error of judgment!—You may believe me on my word of honour, dear Lady Welwyn, you were neither and none of these things. Your looks to-night contradict half your declaration: your amiability at all times refutes the rest."

"What excuse then will serve me?—Shall I say that Sir Robert refused me a new dress,—or that Alexandre disappointed me,—or that I had restive horses, or a perverse husband?"

"Bah—bah!—Nothing, my dear, but your own vanity could prompt such suggestions," cried Madame de Montémar, somewhat indignant to find so much of Pignatelli's attention bestowed upon her fair friend. "You must be aware that the Count has nothing to reply to such equivocations but that you require no aid of dress, new or old, to render you the pearl of the ball-room; that Alexandre is only one of the thirteen hundred distinguished hair-dressers of the capital;

and finally, that when Sir Robert Welwyn or your coachhorses choose to be sulky, you cannot do better than leave them all three at rack and manger—the spot best calculated for the restoration of their good humour.”

“Admirable !” cried Count Ugo, with a prolonged yawn of applause. “You surpass yourself to-night, my dear Duchess. How delightful it is to those who live in your society to find their own crude notions emanate from your lips refined and polished, and glittering with wit and gaiety ! With you one need only exist ; you think and talk for us better than we can for ourselves :” and sinking back in his chair with a second yawn, he re-assumed his wonted air of supercilious listlessness.

“The Duchess, like our first of modern *diplo-mates*, acknowledges no use in words except to disguise her thoughts,” cried Lady Welwyn, bitterly. “She espies treason lurking in ambush where there can be no motive for a *jeu de cache-cache*.—Why should I frame false motives for absenting myself from the best ball of the carnival ?”

“ Because you do not like to own your disinclination to be outshone by these English brides, who are just now creating so prodigious a sensation in our gay circles. Even I, who am safe from the excitement of national competition with either, am somewhat jealous of the Duchess of Cardigan’s diamonds, and of Lady Bruton’s interesting cast of beauty.”

“ I know nothing of either,” cried Lady Welwyn; “ and am therefore little interested by their attractions or proceedings.”

“ And *as* little,” observed her friend, Madame de Montémar, in a spiteful whisper, “ by Sir Henry Bagot’s devotion to Lady Georgina Ellerby?—By the way, my dear, do you know that the marriage of the handsome *attaché* is positively announced, and it is said that the happy pair are to accompany the Duke and Duchess to Italy?”

“ It was quite amusing,” cried the Chevalier, determined not to observe the air of pique with which this piece of information was received by Sir Robert Welwyn’s giddy wife, “ to observe the awkward air with which several of your Eng-

lish beauties greeted the Duke of Cardigan last night at the Palais Royal. It must be very embarrassing, very humiliating, to see the bird for which they have all spread their nets so long and so vainly, perched familiarly on the shoulder of another."

"And of one who seems so careless of the distinction."

"They say he was considerate enough to order a grove of willows to be cut down on his wedding-day, which he bequeathed at parting to those numerous belles of Almack's, whose pretensions he has amused himself by tantalizing ever since he came of age."

"Let him not triumph too loudly," said Ugo Pignatelli, raising himself from his lounging position, and firing up from his apathetic mood, on learning that another man presumed to affect a tone of impertinence still loftier than his own. "For my part I see nothing very brilliant in his grace's hymeneal wreath;—the cypress has scarcely a less dingy branch than the willow."

"The cypress?"—inquired Lady Welwyn.

"Yes!—the Duke of Cardigan has been the

hero of more than one extraordinary adventure since you quitted England. But that the story is connected with reminiscences most afflicting to my own feelings, I would recount it to you myself."

"Ah! my dear Count Pignatelli!" pleaded the Duchess, who dearly loved a sentimental tale, more especially when the aid of a little fashionable scandal was dashed into the sherbet, to render it less cloying.

"Ask Villevargues," said the Count, again relapsing into his dejected and disjointed attitude. "He can tell you the whole affair if he likes; and looks as if he would like to tell you."

"What affair?—You were talking just now of Bagot's marriage?"

"No—no!—of the disasters connected with that of the Duke of Cardigan."

"Ah! *la voilà!*—See!—the Duchess has just made her appearance in the box of the Ambassadors. How very lovely she is—how very graceful—what an intellectual expression in her eyes! Lady Bruton will not bear a comparison with her."

“ Poor thing !—how different was *her* air and tone when I first met her at Naples !” cried Villevargues ; “ how followed she was, how flattered, how admired !—She is not yet three-and-twenty—and a complete wreck.”

“ Nay !” said Madame de Montémar, quite willing to take Lady Bruton’s part when she heard her attractions decried by the Chevalier. “ She is, after all, a very lovely creature—a line of poetry among all Lady Welwyn’s cold, hard, rigid, matter-of-fact fellow-countrywomen. There is an *abandon*,—an air of gentle languor so wholly free from affectation about her, that it grieves me to think her doom is sealed. Majendie has pronounced her to be in a decline ; and from *his* award there is no appeal.”

“ Were I Lord Bruton,” cried Villevargues, “ I should however exert my skill to prevail on so charming a wife to discredit that of the experimentalist. It is true that horrible discovery concerning her odious mother was enough to break her heart, and then the dreadful event which shocked us all so much at the opera last year, must have been to *her* doubly distressing. But in our

time, broken hearts are as easily mended as broken limbs. Lady Bruton will put her's in a tourniquet, and wear it in a sling for a year or two; there is no possible occasion for her to go and die in Italy.—The days of enthusiasm are past; no more crusading,—no more dying for love!”

“ You forget that it is still easy to die of curiosity,” cried the Duchess. “ I shall certainly find my lungs affected before to-morrow, unless you unravel the mystery which envelopes this bridal Duchess of yours, and this beautiful friend of Sir Henry Bagot's — this pensive Lady Bruton.”

“ Take me home with you then,” said the Chevalier, “ and oblige me with a glass of *eau sucrée*, and I will try to make the mystery as much more mysterious,—the explanation as oracular and incomprehensible as tellers of stories usually do. But prepare yourself for a lachrymose tale;—not unmingled with the flighty levities of modern life, but almost too romantic for the age we live in.”

Reader! shall we follow the flippant Villavargues and Lady Welwyn to the luxurious

boudoir of Madame de Montémar?—No!—let us rather attempt in sober sadness or sober cheerfulness our own exposition of the business. The narrative may serve to prove that even a spot, devoted like “The Opera,” to idle amusement—open to the approach of every vulgar footstep—and incessantly haunted by those both of the vulgar and illustrious—may be rendered a scene of interest of the most intense and exciting description;—that the passions have at times been more actively at work within the familiar walls of the King’s Theatre, than in the cabin, the dungeon, or the palace;—that they have witnessed the choicest sighs of love, and even the parting breath of mortal nature.—Listen!

CHAPTER I.

"'Tis neither a grave story nor a gay one," replied the corporal, "but will suit your honour exactly."

"Then I'll thank thee for it with all my heart," cried my uncle Toby; "so prithee begin it, Trim."

STERNE.

THE most perverse or unobservant traveller, from Dan to Beersheba, will scarcely venture to deny that certain spots of earth convey a strong impression of local sanctity; and that on others nature has affixed an indelible character of romance, not unfrequently heightened by the blunders of art, or the freaks of accident. It is not always the donjon or the fortalice,—“high towers or moss-grown steeples,” which arrest the eye of the wanderer amid the wide landscape, and afford a theme to his evening

cogitations or midnight visions at his inn. The country snuggerly—the vine-covered manse—the chateau with its gabled roofs—the villa with its platformed terraces,—sometimes acquire a degree of adventitious interest, derived from trifles but far from trivial in effect.

It is probable, for instance, that no traveller beside the banks of the Traun,—whether the French *savant*, *en diligence*, or the English gentleman released from the durance of an elaborately convenient London travelling-carriage; the German student, with his knapsack on his back, or the fierce Bohemian hussar spurring onwards to his garrison at Verona,—ever passed the village of Elzbach, cozily niched into the acclivitous shore of that beautiful stream, without experiencing a peculiar sensation of sympathy. One among the number might be attracted by the aspect of its neat white quadrangular monastery, perched like a dove's nest among the fissures of the cliff, (its spires just rising above the summit) looking tranquillity, and exhibiting the ascetic but erudite seclusion characteristic of the ecclesiastical estate through-

out Austria. A second might more partially incline towards the neat little village, gathered together beneath the very wings of the *Kloster*, as if to derive shelter from its interposition with Heaven, and so compact in its economy, that the helmet of Otranto might have extinguished it, suburbs and all. While a third, particularly if a man of sentiment, would rather bend his predilections towards the *Schloss*,—the hard, stiff, ungainly mansion of red granite—endowed with the privilege and dignity of its temporal protection; and standing with an air of wild defiance, like a copper-coloured Indian, glaring from among entangled thickets of underwood.

This unostentatious abode, the house or as it was termed in the village, the Castle of Elzstein, possessed it is true among its attributes no air of grandeur, antiquity, elegance, or even comfort. It was evidently a dwelling adapted to a family of moderate means and extent; and disgracing by its inherent ugliness one of the most beautiful sites vouchsafed by the favour of nature. Yet many paused to gaze at leisure on the grotesque distribution of its gables with their sculptured

keystones; on the wild exuberance of its neglected gardens; on its terraces overlooking the river and ornamented with clumsy statues of the worthies of antiquity, as curiously marshalled as those which adorn the ruins of the electoral palace at Heidelberg; and few, very few, could succeed in thereafter obliterating from their recollections the quaint and anomalous character of Elzbach and its *Herrenhaus*.

Sometimes, indeed, that laudable thirst for miscellaneous information so remarkable in the tourists of Great Britain, would induce some gaping John Bull to inquire of his postilion or courier the name of that "queer-looking place;" and in such instances great was the astonishment felt and expressed on learning that it was tenanted by a "Milor." But this designation being in pretty general use on the continent to distinguish all sorts and conditions of Englishmen not of an absolutely menial degree, such an announcement could only lead to a demand for more specific intelligence; and all that courier, or postilion, or even postmaster had to tell of the lord of Elzstein, was the fact that he had served with

distinction in the Imperial army, and the surmise that he was a widower. The prior of the adjoining monastery of St. Florian would sometimes add that he was a good catholic, and therefore of necessity a worthy man; while the damsels or Elzbach, when interrogated on the subject, seldom omitted to record that the mysterious Englishman was blest with an only son. But rarely had the investigation been prosecuted with sufficient zeal to ascertain that the name of the recluse was Count Maldyn, and that he was an Irish colonel, possessing only his wounds and a trifling pension in evidence of his services to the emperor;—for after all it was Elzstein, and not its invisible master, which spoke so forcibly to the imagination.

Now had Count Adrian, the son of this strange “Milor,” been personally introduced into the scene, his striking figure would probably have said more to the fancy of the traveller, if a female, and his accomplished address and intelligent countenance, if of his own gender, than could be discerned in the overgrown terraces and desolate courtyard of his paternal abode;

for Adrian had as completely the air of a hero of romance, as Elzstein of affording its appropriate locale. But the young foreigner was only an occasional resident on the banks of the Traun; and had now been so long absent from Elzstein, as to have become an object of as much curiosity as interest to its inhabitants at large.

At large!—when there were only thirty-seven tenements, and seventy-two inhabitants in the whole community!—among whom more than half were vintagers, devoted to the culture of the estates belonging to St. Florian and his tonsured sons; while the other consisted in the female moiety of their several households—a simple race of beings, devoted to their distaffs and knitting-needles. Over these broad-visaged and broad-skirted individuals, the world and its rumours exercised little influence. To *their* perceptions, Vienna existed rather as a name than as an inhabited metropolis; and even Linz, the yet nearer capital of their little district, appeared a remote and unapproachable Babylon. For in defiance of the progress of civilization, with its rail-roads and post-roads, its steam-carriages and

air-balloons, there still remain an oasis or two in the habitable desert, where conventional trammels have small authority; where the alternation of the seasons—of storm and sunshine, summer with its roses, and autumn with its vintage—afford the sole vicissitudes varying the monotony of existence: where the indulgence of simple appetites forms a paramount enjoyment; where incessant occupation represses the growth of luxurious vices or fruitless ambition; where a life of privation is unimbittered by humiliating contrasts; or is not unfrequently endured with triumphant patience, as a transitory passage to unlimited enjoyment. The Elzbacheners in question were especially contented with their picturesque village and abounding river—their *Pumpernickel* and *Sauerkraut*; for they were neither harassed by the brutality of a feudal despot, nor insulted by the selfish luxuriousness of wealthy burghers. They were treated rather as brethren than inferiors by the saintly community of St. Florian; and had long appropriated Count Maldyn as a friend and father.

If any anxiety disturbed the even tenour of

this peaceful existence, it arose from the visible and increasing decrepitude of the master of Elzstein, and from the prophecies usually put forth in similar instances by the elders of the people, his contemporaries—that the young lord would never prove worthy to fill the old lord's shoes. One or two ancient beldames had legends to relate of the wild feats of Count Adrian's boyhood; while *more* than one or two of the fair spinstresses, their grandchildren, were compelled, in their own despite, to add testimony that the discretion of his demeanour was not amended by his recent sojourn at the university of Göttingen. In short, whenever the dispiriting anticipation of a flood of the waters of the Traun, or the still more positive depression arising from an early frost during the vintage, sat heavy on the souls of the Elzbacheners,—or whenever the sinister auguries of some croaking village orator, or theoretical political economist, caused the frequenters of the hostel of the *Gold Forelle* to shake their heads over their thin potations, it was generally on the absent Adrian they were tempted to vent their ill-humour.

Yet such was the influence of his father's popularity, and such his inherited share in their allegiance and devotion, that whenever Hiob Armbrust—the *major domo* of the castle,—a sort of Corporal Trim, the faithful attendant on Count Maldyn's campaigns—dispensed from the Market-Cross of Elzbach intelligence that a letter had been received from Hanover, and that Count Adrian's arrival was expected at the castle, young and old renounced their enmities, and nothing was talked of during the remainder of the day, but the noble bearing, frank disposition, and open countenance of the young Englishman. Bärbel and Görgel, the fair Elzbacheners who had been involved in his frolic and its detection, on occasion of the last vintage-feast, instead of being forced to bear further witness to his indiscretion, were now joked on his imputed partiality and reminded of the necessity of adding fresh ribands to their wide-winged coifs of the *Linzerinn* fashion. Bläschel, the head fisherman of the district, was advised to hold his nets and boats in readiness for an early expedition; and all the rumours of wonderful boar and

roebuck prevalent in the village for six preceding months, were now collected into a species of sporting magazine, with a view of gratifying his well-known propensities. Even at the monastery, the event of his return was hailed as of high importance; and making all due allowance for the value of an incident of any description in a community thus singularly estranged from the ordinary interests of life, it must be admitted that the old count's enthusiastic attachment to his son seemed to have communicated its infection to half the fathers, and all the daughters of Elzbach.

It was one of those brisk transparent afternoons in October, when the mountain-ash and hawthorn-berries, lying half stripped on the ground beneath the trees from whence they have been shaken by early frosts, betray the approach of a severer season. The wine-press had done its work, and was now laid aside as lumber, till some future vintage; the housewives of the village were busy with their troughs and chopping-knives, preparing the *kraut* for their winter stores; the beechen groves on the opposite bank of the

Traun had assumed their mellow livery of red and yellow; while the bright-eyed robin was seen familiarly perched on the leafless twigs of the tenderer shrubs. The river ran hoarser and fuller in its channel than when reflecting the soft skies of the harvest month; flights of wild fowl from the Styrian and Carinthian marshes occasionally darkened its waters; and in the distance, the mountains of the Salzburg defile displayed their silver crests in the clear horizon. A sprinkling of snow had already fallen in the vicinity of these Alpine heights; and already the woodstack of the *Priorey* of St. Florian was laid under nightly contribution for the use of the huge stove gracing the great hall and refectory. The bleaching-ground through which the little rivulet of the Elz pours its tributary stream into the Traun—baptizing the village as it passes—was white with many a web, bearing witness to the industry of its female population; and old Michelchen, grand-aunt to the Görgel already aspersed in these pages by implication in the pranks of the young lord of Elzstein, was just closing the wicket of the meadow with a bundle

of half-bleached linen grasped beneath her arm, when the military step of Hiob Armbrust was heard ringing on the causeway. The military fumes of his meerschaum announced that the doughty corporal was on his evening march from the castle towards the village.

“ A bright afternoon and the best of luck to you, corporal !” mumbled the ancient dame, quickening her pace with the view of reaching Elzbach in friendly companionship with the great man’s great man.

The corporal nodded his head in acknowledgment, puffing forth a whiff of considerable volume, but uttered not a word in reply ; and though this species of dumb dignity might pass in any other man as a hint that he had nothing to communicate worthy a waste of breath, it was by no means the case with Hiob. *He* was never so loquacious as when he had nothing to say ; never so sparing of his speech as when he had a piece of important news in his keeping ; it was only with a treasure in the chest that he judged it expedient to apply a padlock for its security. On the present occasion, therefore, the

silence of the worthy corporal did not fail to excite a correspondent degree of interest in the apprehensions of Michelchen, who had lived her seventy-two years in this world of craft and cunning, with some profit; and who, having long discovered that the arts of the weaker sex are far more than a match for the stiffest resolves and most prudential scruples of mankind, now determined to win by stratagem the secrets withheld from her participation.

“As I was pottering down to the brook,” said the old woman with a sidelong glance towards her companion, “there met me brother Remigius returning from Elzstein to the *Priorey*. Sorely grieved was the good man in noting the increasing infirmities of the noble count. No less than three fits of the gout since St. John’s day! and our brother misdoubts him that we may even hear of a fourth before Candlemas.”

Corporal Armbrust puffed with still fiercer impatience at this announcement; for it unfortunately chanced that the venerable fraternity of St. Florian maintained a far less distinguished place in his estimation than in that of the

Maldyn family, or of the villagers of Elzbach. In the chances of his military career, he had fought side by side with reformers of every denomination. A long course of good fellowship with Lutherans, Calvinists, Moravians, and all the subdivisional sects of Northern Germany, had greatly tended to relax the severity of his early orthodoxy; and it was suspected among the old women on the banks of the Traun, including Brother Remigius and others of the Florianites, that the taciturn Hiob secretly indulged in latitudes of faith peculiarly unbecoming a veteran servant of the House of Hapsburg, and an active servant in the house of the bigoted Maldyn. A scornful elevation of the bowl of his pipe, his nose and mustached chin, now indicated to Frau Michelchen that he regarded Brother Remigius as an oaf, and his evil auguries as importunate and contemptible; and the artful dame accordingly shifted her manœuvres to a new position.

“ Verily it rejoiceth me, Corporal Hiob,” she resumed, in a wheedling tone, “ to learn, from the reverend father that the dispute between our good prior and the lord of Elzstein, touching the

tollage on the fish-boats going up to the city, is likely to be adjusted; and moreover, that his kingly and imperial majesty is about to—”

It was useless to proceed!—Even Michelchen, despite her three-score years and twelve, retained sufficient optical and mental perspicacity to read in the contemptuously deliberate puffs, emitted by Armbrust’s meerschäum, that Remigius knew nothing of the matter of the tollage; or that the matter was one of perfect indifference to the corporal and his lord. “It must be something concerning Count Adrian,” was her ultimate decision; and she boldly plunged into the heart of the business.

“And so our young lord is forbidden to pass his carnival at Elzstein this year?—Well! the season will be all the sadder for the old folks his goodness was wont to cherish with an extra cup of *Kirschenwasser*, that they might be better able to struggle with the January frosts; but perhaps it may be all the better for those giddy hussies, whose flax is apt to grow stale upon the reel whenever Count Adrian deigns to amuse himself with their *Ländler*. I

warrant me, now, that my grand-niece Görgel will make up twelve ells of cloth the more against the fair at Linz, since my young lord has determined to pass the winter in the north !”

“ *Stockfisch !* ” cried the corporal, involuntarily removing the amber mouthpiece from between his lips, “ Count Adrian will sup at the castle this very evening.”

No sooner was this piece of intelligence wrenched out of his obstinate heart, than he began most grievously to repent his infirmity of purpose ; readily perceiving that instead of permitting him to exercise his ordinary and exclusive privilege of proclaiming the important fact—either in the market-place of Elzstein, or the eating-chamber of the *Gold Forelle*—the unprincipled Michelchen was determined on following up her advantage. She not only accosted every individual who chanced to cross their path, for the pleasure of announcing the young count’s visit ; but actually intruded her leathern visage into sundry dwellings and tenements by the wayside, in order that no one might remain in ignorance of the fact.

“ My young lord Adrian is on the road !”

cried she; "Count Adrian will sleep to-night at Elzstein!"

Till at length the discomfited corporal, like a plenipotentiary despoiled of his credentials on the frontier of the country to which his mission is appointed, suddenly and sullenly turned upon his heel, and retraced his steps to the castle.

CHAPTER II.

A stalwart, active, soldier-looking stripling,
Handsome as Hercules ere his first labour ;
And with a brow of thought beyond his years
In his repose.

BYRON'S WERNER.

ADRIAN MALDYN had just entered his twenty-third year. He was tall, well-formed, and graceful in his person ; while his countenance united peculiar regularity and elegance of lineament, with an intelligent and animated expression. In his disposition he was rash, proud, and headstrong, with a head full of prejudice, and a heart full of romance ; warmly attached to a parent who was disposed to make every sacrifice in his favour, but incapable of disguising his disgust towards Elzstein as a residence, or his distaste for the monotonous tone of his father's habits and occupations. It was wonderful that the granite gables of the old *Schloss* had never been moved from their high estate to crush the

arrogance of the fastidious boy, who presumed to utter his disparaging criticisms on that ancient structure, and on the antediluvian system of its sayings and doings.

So long as the youthful days of the young count had worn away under the tutorage of Brother Remigius—whose lessons of divine philosophy and philosophical divinity were strangely intermingled with the military and equestrian exercises inculcated by Corporal Armbrust—Adrian was contented to pass his leisure hours in the forest with Hiob and his rifle, or on the river with Bläschel and his nets. But “there comes a time, a weary time,” when fathers, as eccentric and independent of the prejudices of society as even Count Maldyn himself, grow anxious that their heirs-apparent should add knowledge of the world to classical acquirements, the living to the dead languages, and the graceful arts to the useful sciences. Although, for reasons peculiarly his own, he had taken up his rest beside the waters of the Traun, and wasted his maturity in an obscure solitude, the count entertained far different views, and indulged in

better hopes for his son. Whatever might be the disasters which induced his own expatriation, or the afflictions which determined his seclusion, they were not hereditary in their influence. He felt that Adrian was untouched by the blight which had sufficed to wither his own existence ; that Adrian had still a country—still a home—to excite his ambition and reward his exertions ; and no sooner did the young count attain his sixteenth year, and as much Latin, mathematics, and historical erudition, as could be gathered from the tuition of the learned librarian of St. Florian, than he was despatched to the university for the completion of his education.

It was many years since Count Maldyn had been called upon for so vast an expenditure of cogitation as it cost him to decide whether the journey of his son, on quitting Elzstein for the prosecution of his studies, should take a northward or southward—an eastern or western direction. His religious prejudices strongly inclined him towards the latter ; inasmuch as the universities of Vienna and Munich still boast their pristine odour of Catholic sanctity. But it

happened that the prior of St. Florian's had a brother—a brother in the flesh as well as the spirit—officiating in a high station at the Ambrosian College in Milan, and willing to bestow the tediousness and officiousness of his vigilance on the tyro of Elzstein. But just when Adrian had begun to flatter himself with a prospect of exchanging the blue-eyed and flaxen-haired charms of Bärbel and Görgel for the raven tresses and dark-eyed glances of the glowing Milanese, and the motetes of the monastery of Elzenkreuz for the cantatas of La Scala, his father decided that a competent knowledge of the English language was indispensable to the well-being of his future fortunes; and that the schemes hereafter to be perfected in Great Britain, could not be more auspiciously commenced than in Hanover. It was in vain that the prior shook his sanctified head, while Brother Remigius recapitulated the varieties of damnable heresy prevalent in Northern Germany:—to Göttingen it was determined that Adrian should go, and to Göttingen he went.

It may readily be imagined that the whole

united *Priorey* of St. Florian could no longer afford a letter of recommendation to the young scholar. But Adrian was not destined to be launched on his new career without a pilot for its course. Even amid his desolate isolation at Elzstein, Count Maldyn had kept up an occasional correspondence with a certain Baron Adelberg; a former companion in arms, who now filled an important office at the vice-regal court of Hanover, and maintained a connexion with the English world, such as assigned him somewhat of the interest of a fellow-countryman in the estimation of the recluse of Elzbach. An epistle, penned in all the fervour of paternal anxiety and addressed to this dignified friend, was accordingly appended to the letter of credit bestowed by Maldyn upon his son, preparatory to his departure in the “kingly and imperial *Eilwagen*” in search after wisdom; nor till the old man caught a last glimpse of that unshapely vehicle, as it followed the windings of the river, along the post-road to Linz, had he ever conjectured the degree of weariness and disgust which circumstances may lend to time and place,—aye! even to the most favourite place. The first

four-and-twenty hours passed in absence from his son, imparted a lesson of self-knowledge more accurate than any which young Adrian was likely to acquire from the professional high-mightinesses of Göttingen. For the first time, Elzstein became less than a paradise in the eye of Count Maldyn.

Adrian, on the contrary, after some few "natural tears," and natural regrets, which lasted during the first stage or two of his journey, rejoiced in an opportunity of extending his limited knowledge of the world; and no sooner was he inaugurated into his novel career, than he began to exult like an eaglet in its first flight from the eyry. In addition to the valuable credentials with which he was furnished by his father to the baron and the banker, he had been loaded with ghostly counsels by his unquwhile preceptors of the monastery, for better security against those heretical perils, the mere apprehension of which was terrific to their narrow souls. Much had they found to say, touching Luther and Melancthon, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague; much concerning the

abominations of Wittenberg, and the absurdities of Herrnhut. They conceived no danger or temptation so likely to beset his path, as the solemn errors of heterodoxy !

The elder Maldyn, although better initiated into the mysteries of a university education, and fully aware of the nature of the snares likely to be spread for his youthful St. Anthony, uttered at parting only a few words by way of warning, and not a syllable by way of menace. He trusted that the precepts and example of sixteen years had not been thrown away upon his son, and wisely left the lesson to be completed by the schooling of experience ; satisfying his own misgivings by a self-assurance that Adrian would not make the worse soldier, or gentleman, or man, for having occasionally heard the chimes at midnight ; and indulged in lapses of discretion such as must have condemned brother Remigius to the discipline, or the worthy superior of St. Florian's to an expiatory pilgrimage to the shrines of Maria Zell or Alt Oetting.

Whether these lapses became more than occasional, rests in the bosom of the indulgent

father ; but certain it is that, more than once, the return of Corporal Armbrust from the *Post Amt* bearing a letter with the Göttingen postmark, sufficed to plunge Count Maldyn into silence and depression for the remainder of the day. These momentous missives were not, however, inscribed in the handwriting of Adrian ;—for Adrian's letters, whether long or short—grave or gay, lively or severe—never failed to bring a glow of pleasure to his father's cheek, and a glance of animation to his eyes ; and were, moreover, apt to find their way, in spirit if not in substance, to the ear of Hiob, and thence through his lips to those of all the ruling elders of the village. The mysterious communications, on the contrary, were endited, either with a cleanliness of caligraphy characteristic of the banker, the notary, or the college tutor,—or in the official scrawl of his friend the baron ; and it was remarkable that the advent of Hanoverian despatches of this description, was invariably followed by some trifling personal sacrifice on the part of the lord of Elzstein. A favourite colt was despatched to Linz on the ensuing market-day for peremptory

sale;—or an under-gardener was paid off and dismissed;—or the bottle of Bisamberger placed on the count's dinner-table was so economized as to make its reappearance there for four successive days. Nay!—upon one occasion—an occasion which brought to hand no less than three of these Göttingenian epistles (the last bearing testimony in its address to the tremulous condition of Adrian's hand)—the epistolary Cerberus was matched in bulk if not in multiplication, by a mysterious square parcel despatched in return by the recluse of the Traun, subscribed to “His Excellency the Well-born Baron Adelberg:”—and it was considered by Hiob as a very remarkable coincidence, that from the day distinguished by this exuberance of foreign correspondence, he could never get sight of the great gold snuff-box set in brilliants, presented to Colonel Count Maldyn on the field of battle, by the Archduke Charles. It had certainly disappeared while the count was shut up in the solitude of his own apartments to grieve over those ill-boding Hanoverian letters!—Misfortunes seldom come alone!

But after the first vacation passed by Adrian at the castle, his father's epistolary intercourse with Göttingen rested wholly with himself, and produced nothing but agreeable impressions at Elzstein. The inexperienced boy became a man sooner than was to be expected from the tenour of his youth; and whatever might be the follies in which he still continued to indulge, he took care that they should never again implicate his beloved and lenient parent in their results. By his careful management, even the idle adventure of Görgel and Bärbel, so familiar to every other inhabitant of the village, was prevented from reaching the ears of Count Maldyn.

In the course of the five years passed by Count Adrian at the university, there was, however, one "untoward event," which, thanks to the officious zeal of Brother Remigius, penetrated the granite walls of Elzstein, although unwhispered among the clay tenements of the village—on other occasions so much more pervious to rumours of mischief. Perhaps, after all, the ex-preceptor might be justified in his interference; for Stephanine Haslinger, the heroine of the adventure, was un-

questionably a far more dangerous neighbour for the young student, than an uncivilized hoyden such as Bärbel the pretty sister of Bläschel the fisherman.

Stephanine was scarcely sixteen—brilliant with natural graces and talents—artful as she was intelligent,—and adding a syren's voice to attractions of considerable personal beauty. On their first acquaintance, Adrian had been persuaded to give up the leisure hours of his vacation to her instruction in the science of music. But before she had wholly accomplished her purpose of entangling the young count, in return, in the perplexities of a secret marriage, Brother Remigius drew the attention of his astonished father towards the affair; when Count Maldyn, affecting to humour Adrian's project of accomplishing the lovely Elzbachener as a professional singer, generously undertook the cost of her tuition in the *conservatorio* at Prague. In the course of a week, the Fraulein Stephanine found herself placed as a boarder in the family of an eminent musical professor attached to that imperial establishment;—an arrangement no less satisfactory

to the infirm grandfather, who had been hitherto burdened with her maintenance, than it was vexatious to the syren of the Traun. Nothing further was heard of her at Elzbach than that her talents had placed her on the road to preferment; and we are at liberty to hope that more explicit intelligence on the subject did not even reach Göttingen.

It was nearly four years after this memorable exercise of benevolence on the part of Count Maldyn, and Adrian had attained all the distinctions of the university, and all the polite accomplishments which a month or two passed in the family of Baron Adelberg at the court of Hanover was likely to confer, when he found himself very unexpectedly summoned home by his father; a provision having been made for the comfort and convenience of his journey, very different from that which had hitherto attended his vacation expeditions. By the old count's especial desire, he found himself in possession of a handsome travelling-carriage, and an expert courier, as well as of a pocket-book so liberally furnished, as to ensure the payment of every

thaler of his debts—from his obligations to the learned Theban his college tutor, to his more occult engagements with young Gustavus Adelberg, the partner and companion of his boyish excesses.

His entrance into Elzbach, therefore, as announced on the present occasion, by Michelchen's garrulity, afforded a far more imposing spectacle and ceremonial than any which, for years past, had graced the village; and it is possible, that had the Elzbacheners been led to anticipate the splendour of his new appointments, they might have been induced to welcome him under a triumphal arch. As it was, divers woollen nightcaps, and beaver-skin foraging-caps, were thrown up in honour of the occasion; while a few "hurrahs" were wheezed and sputtered by the decrepit beings tottering to their doors to look upon the unusual magnificence of their patron's heir. But the labourers were in the fields,—Stephanine was still a resident in Bohemia,—Bärbel, unwarned of his coming, had neglected to add fresh decorations to her butterfly-winged coif of gold; and Adrian was of opinion that

Elzbach had never looked more cheerless and uninviting than on this occasion.

But if no admiring populace were gathered together in honour of his *entrée*, the utmost extent of admiration they could have bestowed on the splendour of his Offenbach calash, the gold lace lavished on the jacket of his showy courier, or the coxcombical airs of his valet, would have been far less gratifying to his vanity than the open-mouthed wonderment with which his personal endowments were hailed by Hiob Armbrust, and the silent pride of affection with which they were noticed by his father. Count Maldyn, whose knowledge of the world had been acquired no less in courts than camps, did not fail to appreciate the suavity of tone, and elegance of address, which now tempered the animation of the handsome Adrian; and on laying his head upon his pillow, after the first evening passed in his son's society, began for the first time to rejoice that all these attractions and accomplishments were not destined to be hidden in the obscurity of Elzstein.

Meanwhile the midnight reflections of his son were scarcely of a less exciting nature. The mo-

tives of his mysterious recal to Austria, and the sources of his father's unwonted munificence, could not but occupy his conjectures; more particularly as no change or difference was perceptible in the establishment of the castle, to justify his hopes that some wonderful event had swelled the revenues of his paternal estate. After being deprived of his night's rest by all the perplexity of guesses, misdoubtings, and visionary anticipations of future prosperity, he made his appearance the following morning at the breakfast-table, overflowing with curiosity. A single glance at his father's face sufficed to dispel his uneasiness. The countenance of Count Maldyn was as annunciatory of family mysteries, and their elucidation, as any visage that ever wore the genuine and mournful pathos of romantic interest; and Adrian had no patience with the unsympathizing voracity with which their visiter, Brother Remigius, fastened upon the Grätz capon he had been dissecting previous to the entrance of his quondam pupil, forbidding all immediate hopes of a *tête-à-tête* between the father and son. The count found himself compelled to take

refuge in Hanoverian politics from the tedium of a dead silence, interrupted only by the good brother's audible labours of mastication. But while Adrian sat desponding over his anticipations that the demolition of the unctuous Styrian dainty would be followed by an attack on a dish of trouts (the celebrated *Lachs Forelle* of the neighbouring lake of Gmund), which according to the fashion of the country, were swimming before him in a wide dish of raspberry vinegar garnished with rings of onions, on which the reverend man cast ever and anon a longing eye—the distant croak of the great bell of Elzenkreuz suddenly startled him from his sensual indulgences, with the remembrance that an extraordinary service was about to be performed at the monastery, in honour of a certain Cardinal Colloredo, archbishop of Salzburg, who had been enrolled in the list of its benefactors two centuries before.

But the moment of explanation did not so speedily follow the hasty exit of his ex-preceptor, as Adrian could have wished. He was compelled to endure the importunate routine of the breakfast-table, and the orderly regularity with which

Hiob Armbrust officiated in its accustomed duties, till he was sorely inclined to quarrel with the iron impenetrability of feature exhibited by the sober corporal in his leisurely proceedings; nay, even when the military pantler and surveyor of the buttery had jingled the last tray out of the room, the young count's impatience was still to be excited by the restlessness of the favourite wolf-dog lying at his father's feet. Draunzt, however, was insensible to the indignation wasted on those rustlings and shiftings with which he strove to render his snooze more comfortable, and the occasional snore which announced the perfect fruition of his endeavours; till at length the younger Maldyn, perceiving that his father remained as silent and abstracted as though they had still been encumbered with the presence of Remigius, Armbrust, the Grätz capon, and the savoury trout, strove to introduce some indifferent topic of conversation, by an inquiry respecting the quantity of wild boar destroyed in the Prince of Paar's last *battue*.

The attempt was eminently successful. Count Maldyn having nerved his fortitude to speak on

the subject nearest his heart, gladly accepted any opportunity to break the ice. After entering with apparent interest into every branch of the business, and listening to Adrian's account of the pleasures of landrail-shooting on the Hanoverian levels, he observed,

“And you will soon have occasion to extend your experience in field-sports; you will soon be able to decide between the attractions of an Austrian boar-hunt, and a Melton fox-chase. It is my intention, my dear son, that you should immediately visit England.”

“England!” involuntarily responded the young count; who seemed to consider that Mecca or Skalholt, were just as germane to the matter. “I thought, sir, you had wholly renounced your interest in the country of your ancestors?—You have more than once assured me, that you consider Germany your native land.”

“My views for the welfare of an only son may chance to differ widely from those I entertain on my own account.”

“But surely, sir, you will accompany me to England?”

Count Maldyn replied only by glancing with a melancholy smile towards the crutches lying beside his easy chair. “ You will get on better, my dear son, unshackled by the decrepitude of such a companion. No ! Adrian ; my wounds, no less than my inclinations, have anchored me for the remainder of my days in the country in whose service they were acquired, and whose liberality has so honourably repaid the sacrifice. Ireland was pleased to bestow on me little beyond a birth-place ; from Austria I have received a tranquil home, a decent maintenance, an honourable rank. If it pleases Heaven, I would also find in her bosom an obscure and peaceful grave.”

Adrian now placed himself on a seat nearer to his father, whose countenance bore witness to the excitement of his feelings. “ But *your* position,” resumed Count Maldyn, “ is widely different. No cankering wound has marred the vigour of your youthful frame ; no disappointments have withered the sanguine impulses of your glowing heart. You have no enmities, no remembered injuries to alienate your destiny from that parent

country with whose well-being your own fortunes are so closely connected ;—no agonizing reminiscences to render its aspect hateful—no grievous experience to make its flatterers contemptible. Go ! therefore, my dear Adrian, to England. Judge with your own judgment the land of your forefathers. Your uncle is no more ; and you must henceforward remember, that instead of an Austrian soldier, you have a British viscount for your father.”

Poor Adrian !—this startling announcement was his first occasion for learning that he had ever been possessed of an uncle ; or was likely to become possessed of a peerage !

CHAPTER III.

Yet Syracusan, say in brief the cause
Why thou departedst from the native home,
And for what cause thou cam'st to EPHEBUS.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

“ AND this, then, my dear father,” exclaimed the young man, after a few further inquiries into the nature and extent of his honours, “ this was the origin of your anxiety to prevent my dishonouring my family by a union with poor Stephanine ?”

“ No !” replied the count, “ you mistake me ; had you been simply the son of Count Maldyn, the Austrian veteran, instead of Lord Abbotscourt, —had you been merely heir to the savings of my pension, instead of to an estate of twenty thousand

a year—I should have entertained the same repugnance, and testified the same opposition. Stephanine Haslinger had no claim to the sacrifice meditated by your partiality. Even had she been amiable and virtuous, you would have done rashly in elevating her so immeasurably above her proper sphere; but as it was—for the measure of your folly was better known to me than you imagine—you had no excuse for presenting such a person in the circle to which of birthright you belong.”

“And may I—dare I ask,” continued Adrian, imboldened by the indulgence with which his first indiscreet interrogation had been received by his father, “what inducements determined you to resign your own position in that circle, and to desert those privileges of station to which you affix so high a value?”

“Perhaps I should have forestalled these inquiries,” replied Lord Abbotscourt gravely; “for I feel that it is time you should know something of your father, and—”

“Do I not know him,” interrupted the impe-

tuous young man, “ as the kindest and best of parents ? ”

“ And of your *mother* ! ” persisted his lordship ; and the tone of consciousness in which this word was pronounced, served to remind his auditor that the name had scarcely ever before been uttered in his hearing. “ Your mother—to whom your lineaments bear so strong a resemblance ; to whose destinies, I pray that those of her child may afford no parallel ! The details by which I am about to make them known might appear prolix and tedious to other ears ; but remember, they have sacred claims upon the interest of her child !—

“ It is of myself, however, that I am first called upon to speak. I was born, Adrian, the third son of Lord Abbotscourt ;—a nobleman deriving his dignity among his countrymen, less from the distinction of a Stuart viscounty, than from the Milesian descent boasted by the ancient house of Mauldwyne. He was a proud man, a bigoted Catholic, and a tenacious politician ; morbidly sensitive to the humiliated condition of

his native land, and detesting even a Protestant the more for being an Englishman. My father fancied, that his unconcealed contempt for the constituted authorities of the land arose solely from disaffection towards the house of Hanover; but such was his natural haughtiness of character, that I doubt whether he could have maintained a loyal degree of humility in presence of those faithful sons of the true church, the exiled princes of the Stuart family.

“My eldest brother, heir to all the frailties and animosities of his line, was educated in the sullen reserve of a home education; and his austere and selfish disposition promised no diminution to the defects of character of the Viscounts Abbots-court. My second, my dear Wrottesley, who was brought up with a view to the dignities of the Roman Catholic church, would have made as urbane and intelligent a representative of the family honours, as Mr. Maldyn his becoming substitute in the stole or the mitre. Wrottesley seemed destined by nature for an amiable man of the world; while the firstborn of our line affected all the frigid severity of an anchorite.

Of the third brother—of myself—it is needless to say more than that Randolph Maldyn, some five-and-twenty years ago, exhibited both in person and disposition a pretty exact resemblance to the Adrian Maldyn of to-day. You do not know yourself, my boy ; or you would be aware that this definition supposes your father to have been rash, ungovernable, prejudiced,—intemperate in the pursuit of pleasure,—obstinate in adherence to predilections idly conceived, and dignifying the defect by the name of constancy ;—frank even to indiscretion, in word and deed, and claiming merit for the folly under the titles of candour and independence ;—endowed with many of the best qualities that adorn the soldier, and many of the worst which incapacitate a citizen.”

“Your portrait, my dear father, is not a flattering one.”

“Let me, therefore, smooth down the ruffled plumes of your vanity, by informing you that I was considered the best-looking of my family ; and that the partiality entertained by Lord Abbotscourt for his youngest son, was supposed

to arise from a foolish pride in the superiority of his external endowments. But whatever the cause of his unreasonable predilection, I was in no humour to be satisfied with the effect when, instead of permitting me to join my brothers in the European tour which was to complete their education, he announced his intention of retaining my society in Ireland during their absence. He did not choose, he said, to be left alone at Abbotscourt Castle; and however unwillingly, I was forced to concur in the decision.

“ My father had, however, no just grounds for his complaints touching the loneliness of his baronial residence; for although for many previous years condemned to the desolation of a widower's condition, he possessed in my only sister a companion whose gentleness, cheerfulness, and filial submission, might have afforded ample compensation for the departure of his sons. There exists not—there cannot exist—even among those favoured circles of your countrywomen to whose beauty, elegance, and intellectual endowments you will shortly devote

your homage, a more pure and captivating example of feminine excellence than was afforded by Florentia Maldyn. She was the darling of all our hearts; and richly did she merit their partiality.

“But although Lord Abbotscourt made no secret of his contempt for the powers of companionship of his beautiful daughter, I took care that he should have ample opportunity to form a truer appreciation of her merits. Seizing every pretext, reasonable or unreasonable, to absent myself from home, and exchange the monotonous routine of Abbotscourt for the gaieties of Dublin, I succeeded, partly by soothing and partly by defying my father’s anger, in establishing a sort of residence in the capital; and Lord Abbotscourt was pacified during my absence by an assurance that the chief object of my visits to Dublin was to cultivate the friendships and connexions pointed out by his Milesian prejudices to my adoption. Whether in regard to my brothers, my sister, or myself, he considered it impossible that a child of *his* should presume to exercise its own free will and personal choice;

it was only by stealth or stratagem we ever ventured to indulge our natural inclinations.

“ For some time previous to the epoch to which I allude, the tone of Irish society had exhibited, in the most marked manner, the pernicious influence of evil example in the high places of the land. A character of libertinism unblushingly established at the castle and in the vice-regal circle, afforded an apology for the vices of every rank of society; and the profligacy which held itself excused amid the refinement, brilliancy, fashion, and wit, of the English coterie collected round our luxurious lord lieutenant, exhibited only a coarser shade of licentiousness in its general adoption. Every moral obligation, every restriction of decency, was publicly outraged; and even my father’s excess of disgust and detestation seemed justified by the insults offered to the Irish capital through the vices of the English rulers placed in authority over the land. But my father was by no means singular in his discontent. Murmurs arose among husbands and fathers, who were not easily reconciled to those lessons of infamy dispensed to their female relatives by the

smiling mischiefs of the Castle; and very shortly after my first visit to Dublin, the appointment of the Earl of Templeton to the viceroyalty at once removed all cause of offence, and was said to proceed from certain indignant remonstrances of the higher, or rather, the *better* order of Irish society, which had reached the Royal ear.

“ It would have been difficult to find, throughout the whole range of the British nobility, two persons better skilled to attempt the reformation of the frivolous and licentious tone pervading the Irish court, than Lord Templeton and his wife. Harsh, cold, and stately,—both were too completely self-engrossed to suspect or heed the discontent with which their arrival was noted by the recent frequenters of the Castle; as well as by the bigoted remnant of national nobility, who regarded his lordship’s modern coronet with undisguised contempt. They were eager, indeed, to impute to himself the rapacity by which his grandfather had contrived, in the course of a long official career, to win his way to opulence and distinction; but in this they overstepped the truth. Whatever might be the new viceroy’s faults as a

statesman, he was an upright citizen, a man of unimpeachable rectitude.

“ Perhaps he presumed too far on this unswerving purity of moral conduct. Spotless and commanding as a rock of adamant, he was scarcely less hard and unsusceptible ; and his severity of demeanour, which was more than rivalled by the ceremonious formality of Lady Templeton, tended not a little to augment the attractions of his young and lovely daughters. Lady Katharine and Lady Cecil Darley appeared almost too joyous and warmhearted to have been born and fostered amid the frigid stateliness of the English aristocracy ; and although, previous to the arrival of Lord and Lady Templeton, it had been established as a rule by the courtiers and friends of their predecessors that the new court should be rigorously shunned by its recent adherents, many found it impossible to resist the captivating manners of these lovely girls.”

“ I conjecture,” interrupted Adrian, “ that my father was not remiss in rendering his homage ? ”

“ I fear I must pronounce myself to have been among the first deserters from my party ;

and though the gracious acceptance I met with from the first day of my presentation to the new lord lieutenant, was evidently the result of policy (for the extent of my father's influence and of his opposition to the ruling powers, was duly understood and appreciated), the frankness with which I found my visits welcomed by his daughters, seemed to my boyish vanity a tribute to my own merit. Even Lady Templeton, their cold and self-sufficient mother-in-law, received my advances with an unusual degree of courtesy. Piqued by the neglect with which her *début* in Ireland was greeted by the highest order of society, and finding it impossible to overawe the uncivilized inhabitants of Dublin by airs of hauteur unsupported by the presence and allegiance of her own order, she now strove to conciliate in my person the rebellious clan which still bade defiance to her supremacy. But with Lady Templeton and her policy, I had little sympathy; or rather, encouraged by the distaste with which this recent mother-in-law was regarded by the daughters of her lord, I allowed my demeanour towards her to testify somewhat more than indifference."

“ And Lady Katharine, my dear father—Lady Cecil?—Surely I am right in anticipating—”

“ Lady Katharine,” resumed Lord Abbots-court, without noticing his son’s interruption, “ although the elder of the two sisters, was by no means the one to whom a stranger would have assigned that seniority. Volatile and apparently inconsiderate as a child ; eager for amusement, and only prevented by the high-breeding of her address from betraying the heartless egotism of the mere lover of pleasure, she appeared formed for a life of prosperity and sunshine—a butterfly irradiating the genial atmosphere of a summer’s day ! Nor was her sister’s a much graver disposition ; but Cecil had more of cheerfulness than levity in her disposition, and a degree of kindliness in her heart which prevented her from indulging in the satirical sallies enlivening the conversation of Katharine.—But even the most eager votary of laughing eyes and sportive tones, although on a first acquaintance he might be attracted by the buoyancy of spirit so bewitching in Katharine, was sure to find himself in the end permanently

attached by the docile and feminine character of her sister.

“ Such, unfortunately, was my own case. During the early days of my intimacy at the Castle, I had not hesitated to distinguish Lady Katharine Darley by a preference so strongly marked, that the voice of society immediately hailed me as her lover—her suitor—her husband,—long before I dreamed of tendering more to her acceptance than my hand in the dance, or the use of my favourite horse. But no sooner did I find myself congratulated on all sides as a successful pretendant to her hand, than I began to enter into a more careful investigation of my inclinations, and of the comparative merit of the two sisters ;—an investigation ending in the conviction that my fancy, and not my feelings, had been touched by Lady Katharine’s charms ; and that, although she might claim a decided pre-eminence in point of beauty, she had no ulterior excellence to oppose to the merit of the soft and gentle Cecil. Warned by my previous infirmity of judgment, I refrained on this occasion from the rash impetuosity which had marked my

original preference. I was not sufficiently inexperienced in the ways of the world to imagine, that the younger son of an Irish viscount afforded an object of much consideration to the daughter of the wealthy and distinguished Earl of Templeton; I even knew with certainty that his lordship, on learning the Dublin reports of my union with Lady Katharine, had replied as an unanswerable negative, that ‘Mr. Maldyn was a Catholic;’ while Lady Templeton evinced her still more decided contempt of my pretensions by observing that the tale required no refutation, for that I was a younger son and a beggar. I was aware, therefore, that I ran no risk of finding my attentions eagerly appropriated by the parents of the object of my admiration; it was the demeanour of Lady Katharine herself which taught me to moderate the rashness of my homage.

“It was impossible to deny that however insignificant in her eyes my value as an adorer, she was prompt to notice and resent the change in my feelings. Few women have sufficient generosity of mind to despise a conquest—however despicable—awarded to them by the general opi-

nion of the world; and although to a girl familiar with the attractions and admiration of London society my pretensions as a lover probably appeared absurd, yet in the dearth of better suitors, and the absence of all but the superannuated aid-de-camps selected by Lord Templeton's prudence to become the partners and companions of his daughters, the spirited Lady Katharine decided that Mr. Maldyn, a popular member of the coterie which frowned defiance at her mother-in-law, was the only man in the circle of the Castle worth flirting with,—or worthy to be entrusted with the secret of her contempt for the Hottentots, his fellow-countrymen,—and her detestation of Lady Templeton, the precisian. If she did not encourage me as a suitor, at least she adopted me as a confederate; and gladly would I have maintained myself on that footing in her favour.

“ Scarcely, however, did I become enlightened as to the degree of influence exercised by Cecil over my bosom, when I perceived that Lady Katharine was equally discerning on the subject; and that her resentment of the offence, instead

of exhibiting itself in the ordinary airs of disdain reserved by women for such occasions, took a far more perilous shape. In becoming my enemy for life, she assumed a familiar tone of confidential regard ; while far from resuming the frankness of her criticisms on Lady Templeton, she affected to recognize a thousand new and amiable qualifications hitherto overlooked in her mother-in-law ; and far from pursuing her raillery on the dullness and vulgarity of the viceregal court, became all courtesy to its guests—all submission to the etiquette exacted by her father. Without immediately perceiving the drift of these changes, I had a vague presentiment that their result would prove inauspicious to my views.

“Cecil meanwhile, the lovely and gracious Cecil, deigned to encourage the idolatry of her acknowledged votary with a degree of frankness arising no less from the artlessness of her mind and manners, than from the slighting tone in which, in their sisterly intercourse, Lady Katharine had originally affected to speak of my preference ;—making no secret of her intention to discard the romantic and presuming young Milesian should a more appropriate dangler present

himself to her acceptance, and deriding my pretensions to her favour as troublesome and vexatious. Single-minded beyond the common simplicity of her sex, poor Cecil regarded these murmurs as genuine, and fancied she was conferring a favour on her sister by accepting my rejected regard. Nay ! so little did she attempt to disguise the emotions of mutual affection with which she repaid the gift of my whole heart, that I soon lost sight of all my prudential resolves, and with a full consciousness of the impossibility of obtaining the sanction of our families to such a measure, sought and obtained her promise to become mine for ever.

“ Madman that I was !—While I placed on the finger of my dear Cecil a solemn pledge of our betrothment, I acknowledged and believed myself the happiest of men ; overlooking at that moment my incapability to provide a maintenance for my wife ; and forgetting that the secret of our mutual tenderness—a secret comprehending the happiness of our future life—was entrusted to the sister whose weakness we had laid bare—the woman whose pride we had piqued into the worst passions of her sex ! ”

CHAPTER IV.

Oh ! rake not up the ashes of our fathers,
Implacable resentment was their crime,
And grievous hath the expiation been.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

“ IT was but a few days, my dear Adrian, after the formation of this rash engagement, that a manifest change occurred in Lady Templeton’s demeanour towards her daughter-in-law and myself. Instead of restraining our intercourse, as formerly, by the prudish severity of her matronly decorum and viceregal dignity, Lady Cecil was thrown as if by preconcerted intention into my society ; and, had I not been rendered suspicious by the almost unnatural cordiality with which Lady Katharine affected to enter into our pro-

jects, I should have readily fallen into the snare. Riding parties, and water parties, and excursions into the lovely scenery of the county of Wicklow, were arranged by Lady Templeton, as though for the sole purpose of favouring our interviews; for it was always *my* arm to which Cecil was consigned for protection, my skill as a charioteer which was supposed to reassure her apprehensions. But fully aware of the danger of a premature discovery of our attachment, I was on my guard; and, instead of profiting by the facilities thus afforded, resumed in public my tone of intimacy with Lady Katharine, and thus still farther aggravated her resentment by rendering her the screen of my real passion. She did not remonstrate;—but the silent indignation of a vindictive woman is like the deadly vapour haunting the flowery savannahs of a pestilential climate. I watched the scrutinizing glances of Lady Templeton, and fancied it sufficient if I could mislead *their* inquisition; but it was Katharine—the slighted Katharine—from whom I had most to dread.

“In the midst of these raptures and perplex-

ities, I received a letter from my father, requesting my immediate presence at Abbotscourt ; and, as it was not only couched in his usual terms of parental interest, but alluded to the infirmity of his own health as his motive for desiring to see me at the castle, I entertained no suspicion that any thing was wrong. After a hasty farewell to Lady Cecil, and an entreaty to her sister that she would watch over the happiness of my beloved during my short absence, I flew to testify my obedience to my father's commands.

“ Unfortunately it was the dinner-hour at Abbotscourt when I made my appearance ; so that I had no opportunity for a moment's interview with Florentia, or with Father John (Lord Abbotscourt's confidential chaplain), to warn me of the approaching storm. I was received with his lordship's accustomed abruptness of demeanour ;—nothing unusual in the tone of his interrogations concerning Dublin, its politics, its diversions, and society, induced me to more than my usual caution in reply. I said little of the Castle, for it was never included in my father's line of inquiry ; but much—*too* much—of the

antiquated dowagers and noble malcontents with whom I knew he was anxious I should associate. Unwilling to proclaim my neglect of his recommendation, I was so engrossed by my awkward endeavours to appear familiar with their habits, and versed in their opinions, that I did not even perceive the uneasiness of my sister, who repeatedly interrupted my replies by allusions to my brothers—to their tour—and other topics likely to attract my attention.

“ ‘ You are probably in correspondence with Wrottesley?’ inquired Lord Abbotscourt. ‘ Have you heard from him since his arrival at Rome?’ ”

“ ‘ So often and satisfactorily,’ I replied, ‘ that I am more than ever tempted to regret your lordship’s disapprobation of my anxious desire to bear him company in his continental tour.’ ”

“ ‘ Indeed!’ exclaimed my father, incredulously;—so incredulously, that I was beginning to utter vehement affirmations of my sincerity, when again, and in the harshest manner, he interrupted me.

“ ‘ You are an infernal hypocrite, my precious

Randolph!’ he exclaimed, fixing his eyes fiercely upon my face. ‘By heavens! I blush to find a son of mine so determined, and yet so inexpert a liar!—Here has been your sister Florence, grimacing at you for the last half hour, to put a stop to your romances respecting that circle of my friends, which you presume to call your own, although for weeks and months past you have been contemptuously rejected from their society.’

“ ‘It is true, my lord,’ I replied—swelling with the conviction of having somewhat exceeded the measure of fact in my allusions to the courtesies of his favourites—‘it is true that I may have lately testified some degree of neglect towards persons whom your advice has made it my duty to conciliate, but—’

“ *True!*’ ‘interrupted Lord Abbotscourt—
‘*true!*—and asserted by *you*—by Mr. Randolph Maldyn?—by the minion of my right honourable Lord Grizzle, of Dublin Castle—the esquire of these still more honourable dames, who condescend to initiate the honest women of Ireland into the filthy vices of ancient Rome and modern Lon-

don!—*True!*—are you sure that you remember the meaning of the word? ’

“ For a single moment I fancied my father’s violence must proceed either from insanity or intoxication; but a deliberate survey of his countenance having sufficed to convince me that his fury was perfectly methodical, I rose to leave the room. I felt that I was not sufficiently master of myself to listen with patience to similar upbraidings.

“ ‘ Stay ! young man,’ said Father John, laying his hand detainingly on my arm. ‘ A father has an unlimited claim on the forbearance and submission of his child. The time may come when his lordship will listen to your vindication.’

“ ‘ It must come—it shall come;’ I faltered with quivering lips. ‘ In my own behalf I have nothing to urge:—I have but one reply for the man who stigmatizes my honour; and that reply is not for a parent. But for those others—those women—those *Englishwomen* whom Lord Abbotscourt has thought proper to asperse—’

“ ‘ Fool !’ exclaimed my father, stamping im-

patiently on the floor, while Florentia vainly interposed to moderate his vehemence, ‘will you attempt to deny a proposition echoed from one end of the island to the other?—will you affect to disclaim a charge, the objects of which glory in its notoriety?—Go, go! Randolph!—these Lady C—s and Lady R—s of your’s will renounce your friendship when they hear that you have been presuming to bleach the stains of their infamy!’

“ ‘I am completely puzzled by your allusions,’ said I, secretly delighted to find that his angry retort referred to the circle of the former court instead of to the Darley family. ‘The ladies, my lord, of whom you speak have so long been strangers to the Castle, that I had almost forgotten their existence, nor have I the slightest motive for advocating their cause.’

“ ‘I was sure of it!’ exclaimed my sister, drying her tears. ‘My dearest father! deign to listen to Randolph’s exculpation. I am persuaded you will find him innocent in every other particular.’

“ ‘Innocent!’ cried Lord Abbotscourt, tremb-

ling with rage, and striking on the table a letter he drew from his pocket—‘ Can he prove himself innocent of having exposed me to the insult of this?—to the shame of being cajoled by the condescensions of an English ——’

“ ‘ My dear father !’ again expostulated poor Florence, dreading from experience the sound of those coarse invectives suggested by his intemperate fury. ‘ Lady Templeton is recognized as a woman of the highest honour and virtue, even by those who abhor the politics of her lord and his party.’

“ ‘ A woman of honour and virtue !—the superannuated maiden-daughter of an upstart law-lord, purchased by the high and mighty Lord—Templeman—Templetown—what’s the fellow’s name?—as a duenna for his scapegrace daughters !—She, to presume to address her glozing condescensions to the son of ——’

“ ‘ Twenty generations of pure Milesian blood !’ I rashly ventured to observe. ‘ It is indeed a strange presumption on the part of the representative of majesty.’

“ ‘ Young sir !’ remonstrated Father John,

‘ must I again remind you of the filial duties ——’

“ ‘ Silence !’ cried my father :— ‘ I have no longer a claim on his filial duty—I disown him as a son.’

“ ‘ Then is it time for me to quit this place !’ said I, moving towards the door. ‘ I came hither, my lord, in obedience to your commands ; and, at the same suggestion, shall willingly quit Abbotscourt for ever. I should indeed be unworthy the name of Maldyn, did I remain in your presence to provoke you into further forgetfulness of what is due to me and to yourself.’

“ On quitting the chamber, I could not close my ears to the burst of vituperation with which this intemperate sally was received by Lord Abbotscourt ; and as the horses which conveyed me from Dublin had not yet left the castle, I was about to fulfil my announcement of immediate departure, when Florence, who had wisely left my father to the consolations and spiritual counsels of his chaplain, joined me in the hall and drew me towards her own apartments. At

the soothing of my sister's gentle voice, my anger subsided. Florentia was several years older than myself—old enough, indeed, to have blended in my early years somewhat of the tender authority of a mother with her sisterly caresses. But a short time since, and I had been “little Randolph” in her chidings and endearments; and I became again, as it were, a child—while I listened to the remonstrances, half inaudible through her tears, with which she strove to tranquillize my ungovernable temper.

“The mystery of Lord Abbotscourt's excitement was soon explained. He had received, on the preceding day, a letter which the viceregal seal of office on the envelope might perhaps have condemned unopened to the flames, had it not been addressed by a female hand. The cunning Lady Templeton, ignorant I presume of the implacable nature of my father's political and national animosities, had seized on what she considered a favourable opportunity to conciliate the gratitude of one of the staunchest opponents of her lord and his government, by acquainting him in a tone of affected candour and interest, that his

son—"a young man for whom Lord Templeton and herself entertained the warmest regard, and whom they had received into their family on the most affectionate footing, had recently betrayed sentiments of a strong attachment to one of its members; and that, without referring to their own disapprobation, she considered it her duty to forestal that of his lordship by apprizing him of the fact. 'She was satisfied,' she said, 'that the well-known opinions of Lord Abbotscourt would suggest the propriety of immediately recalling Mr. Maldyn from a circle to which henceforward his society must be unacceptable.'

"This last uncourteous phrase was, in fact, the true source of my father's displeasure. He was indignant, it is true, to find himself addressed in a tone of patronage by one whom he regarded as an upstart; but he could sooner have forgiven me my passion for the daughter of an English Tory, the upholder of the Orange faction, than for having exposed myself and him to the contumely of this tacit rejection. To find his favourite son disdained in the paltry circle of Lord

Templeton's Birmingham court, was to him as the bitterness of death.

“ Alternately cursing the importunate and ill-bred officiousness of Lady Templeton, and the indiscretion of Lady Katharine, who I doubted not had betrayed our secret to her mother-in-law, I now applied to Florence for her opinion as to my chance of hereafter obtaining my father's sanction to my union with Lord Templeton's daughter.

“ ‘ Perhaps,’ she replied, ‘ I should show more wisdom in discouraging your hopes by an assertion that the thing is impossible. But I know my father. Like all persons at the mercy and impulse of strong passions, he is easily influenced by those he loves; and were he once convinced that the happiness of his favourite is dependent on this connexion, I am far more inclined to believe that you might win *his* consent than that of Lord Templeton's worldly and mercenary family.’

“ ‘ If *I* know any thing of his lordship's temper,’ said I, ‘ *their* opposition would tend to soften his own.’

“ ‘ Perhaps so ; but you have other obstacles to contend with—other adversaries to overcome.’

“ ‘ Indeed ! To whom, excepting my dear Florence, can the affairs of so unimportant a person afford a subject of interest ?’

“ ‘ Florentia hesitated. ‘ I am unwilling,’ said she at length, ‘ to give utterance to what you may estimate only as an ungenerous suspicion ——’

“ ‘ Speak out, my dear—dear sister,’ cried I, apprehending an interruption to our interview.

“ ‘ You must have noticed,’ she replied, ‘ the asperity with which my father alluded to the female inmates of the castle. You are aware, that every day—every hour—serves to diminish his intercourse with society. Of the few guests of our own creed and degree formerly admitted at Abbotscourt, scarcely *one* now finds admittance into its gates.’

“ ‘ So I might have concluded from his lordship’s strange misconception of the nature of Lady Templeton’s coterie. The schism between the party of the present lord lieutenant and the libertine associates of his predecessor, is an affair

familiar to every haberdasher in Dublin, although totally unsuspected by my father.'

" 'He is more than ignorant—he is deceived,' said Florentia, mildly. 'The infirmity of his health renders him chiefly dependent for amusement on the companionship of Father John, who abuses his confidence by distorted representations of all that is passing in the world.'

" 'Maldyn,' I observed, 'entertains the highest opinion of my father's chaplain.'

"Florentia shook her head. 'As the tool of his own purposes! Do you remember my brother's vehement opposition to Lord Abbots-court's proposal that Father John should accompany him on his continental tour?—No! no!—he was left here, my dear Randolph, only to circumvent your influence over my father's mind. Attached to Maldyn by ties of interest, as well as by a persuasion of his zeal in the cause of the true church such as he has little reason to attribute to yourself, Lord Abbotscourt's chaplain believes he is serving the family of his patron, while he favours his own views, by exciting a prejudice against you in my father's mind. Not content

with narrating every offensive anecdote current respecting the late lord lieutenant and his set and transferring its odium to the Templeton family, he has taken care that a hundred vile pamphlets and lampoons should reach the castle, such as could not fail to irritate my father against the society to which you have attached yourself.'

" 'I will see Father John—these nefarious practices must be explained.'

" 'No ! my dear brother,' resumed Miss Maldyn, 'you must do nothing to expose our confederacy. Confide your interests to my hands, and obey Lord Abbotscourt's injunctions by quitting us for a time ; but do not aggravate his displeasure by a renewal of your offence.'

" 'How can I do otherwise?' I exclaimed. 'My dear Cecil expects me, and—'

" 'Loving you with only half the tenderness you ascribe to her, and adorned with only half the virtues your letters have taught me to believe her own, Lady Cecil will readily forgive your neglect. Go, go, my dear Randolph ! my father approaches.'

" I submitted myself, however unwillingly, to

Florentia's guidance. I quitted my father's house, and prudently absented myself from that of Lord Templeton; nay, for some days after my return to Dublin, forbore attempting even a clandestine interview with his daughter, although I believed, and not without reason, that the feelings of my poor Cecil would be severely wounded by this apparent alienation. No sooner, however, did she learn that I was present in every scene of fashionable amusement, than she surmounted her reluctance and accompanied her sister and Lady Templeton to various places of public resort. This was too much for me. To behold Lady Cecil's pale face, and suppress the inquiries urged by my throbbing heart,—to encounter her melancholy smile without presuming to whisper a single word of tenderness or sympathy, was an effort beyond my strength. Was she not mine—my own—my betrothed?—In the irritation of my mind, after witnessing one night at the theatre the change that a few short weeks had wrought in her appearance, I addressed a few rash inconsiderate lines to my future wife; which, as I might have anticipated, were intercepted, placed

in the hands of her mother-in-law, and by Lady Templeton's malicious intervention, in those of her lord. Following her previous line of policy, she even persuaded him to address to my father a dignified rebuke for his neglect of her counsels ; while to myself he forwarded a remonstrance which was any thing but dignified, accusing me of a base breach of hospitality, and forbidding me all further intercourse with his family.

“ But although thus excluded from the private circle of the Castle, I maintained sufficient communication with divers of its members to discover that Lady Cecil Darley, although in a declining state of health, was about to be removed from her family, and placed in the household of some distant relative in Scotland ; and that she was subjected in the mean time to the harshest usage. The consequences of this injudicious severity were only too favourable to my wishes. She consented to elope with me,—she became my wife in all the shame and confusion of a clandestine marriage ;—and on awaking from the madness of my dream of triumphant passion, I found myself the husband of a lovely

and helpless woman, reared in all the delicacy of splendour and refinement, to whom I was incapable of affording the common necessities of life ! Lord Templeton's rage at the public insult thus offered to his family and the dignity of his office, expended itself in coarse invectives which rendered it impossible for me to humiliate myself by seeking his forgiveness ; and as to my father, I knew him too well to believe he would do otherwise than exult in the disastrous consequences of my disobedience. It was even with some difficulty that my kind Florentia found means to evade the espionage of Father John, and supply me from her private allowance with the means of present subsistence.

“ But time passed on ; weeks and months came and went ; and at length even these were exhausted. We were too proud to seek pecuniary assistance from those who, obsequious to the will of the man in power, affected to emulate Lord Templeton's resentment ; and the remote cottage in which immediately on our marriage we buried ourselves from the observation of society, soon became degraded by the galling humiliations of abject poverty. My

father publicly proclaimed my disinheritance ; my sister was placed in a provincial convent of peculiar strictness, to prevent all further communication between us ; and through the interference of Father John with their tutor, my letters to my brothers were returned unopened. I had no longer a friend from whom I could hope for succour in my distress.

“ Adrian ! you have been educated in habits of frugality ; you have seen your father restrict himself to homely food and simple raiment ; you have often grieved over his abstinence from the ordinary indulgences of his station in life.—But you have never felt the chilling grasp of actual privation ; you have never submitted to the taunts of an insulting creditor ; you have never seen the wife of your heart struggling with the mortifications of penury ; you have never watched the features you love sharpening beneath the touch of want. Adrian ! while you were yet an unborn and expected treasure, your mother laboured for you, laboured for her own subsistence, laboured for the fever-struck and feeble husband, who lay like a crushed snake, cursing his own infirmity

and the triumph of his enemies. I then thought no human suffering could exceed the anguish with which, from my humble bed, I watched the frail and delicate form of the highborn Cecil, engaged in menial offices for my sake ; but I have since recognised my error, and learned to sigh for a *renewal* of that season of ruin and affliction.

“ Unable to endure the spectacle of her wretchedness, the first voluntary act of my recovery was to address a letter to Lord Templeton, acquainting him with his daughter’s actual condition. I cared not in what opprobrious terms he might upbraid me in return ; I cared not for Lady Templeton’s sneers, nor even for the gratified malice of Lady Katharine, who had long since overtly enlisted in the ranks of our enemies. A remittance of money, sufficient to afford to my wife those luxuries, those necessities, now so painfully needful—yes ! a paltry and reluctant pecuniary dole—would have reconciled me to the most injurious accusations heaped on myself. But, alas ! a still severer penalty was to be attached to the concession.

“ In the letter addressed to me by Lady Cecil’s

father, no tone of harshness or of contempt was discernible. It was cold and formal, but ceremoniously courteous; and after pointing out to me, that in consequence of my father's renouncement it became my duty to assist by my personal exertions in the maintenance of my expected family, he tendered to my acceptance a commission in a dragoon regiment commanded by a distant connexion of the Darley family, then on the point of embarkation for India. In the event, and *only* in the event of my concurrence with his lordship's views, Cecil was to be received into his house, pardoned her former trespasses, and cherished during my absence with parental and sisterly tenderness.

“My heart misgave me!—I foreboded some latent mischief from this extraordinary change of tone; nor did I dare confide to Lady Cecil a proposal which her tenderness for the originator of all her sufferings might induce her to reject. But after gazing through my tears at her altered countenance, and at the squalid abode to which she would be confined by opposition to Lord Templeton's will, I addressed him a few hasty words

of acceptance, trusting that necessity would eventually reconcile her to the measure.

“Adrian, I dare not dwell on the scenes which followed our arrival in Dublin. Your poor mother!—No!—I dare not dwell on the subject. Suffice it that I was held by the Templeton family to the very letter of my agreement; and that they continued to deceive Lady Cecil into ignorance of the motive and moment of my departure.”

CHAPTER V.

Is there a cause in nature
For these hard hearts ?

LEAR.

It was not till evening that Count Maldyn was enabled to resume the narrative which proved so exciting to his own feelings, and to those of his son. But Adrian had little leisure for the indulgence of his anxieties. All the thrones and dominions of Elzbach—from the venerable superior of Elzenkreuz, down to the young and vivacious Bläschel—made it their duty to intrude upon him with their congratulations on his return,—their regrets at his approaching departure; besides divers inquiries tending to draw forth the nature

of his business in England, and the origin of the changes in the establishment at Elzstein. The curiosity of the fisherman was most unsatisfactorily appeased by the intelligence that the young count had fixed on too early a day for the commencement of his journey, to admit of a previous expedition to the Traunsee; while that of the dignitary of the church was forced to content itself with an assurance, that Adrian would pass a social evening at the *Priorey*, previous to his departure for the land of heresy. Had either Bärbel or Görgel been despatched by the elders of the village on a similar errand of diplomacy, it is possible that their discoveries might have been of a more comprehensive nature; but ever since the notice bestowed by the young count on the fair Stephanine became matter of public scandal, Bärbel had transferred her smiles to the gardener of Elzstein; and Görgel, half sulky—half jealous—was supposed to be bent upon the conquest of the surly Hiob.

At length the importunate ceremonies of greet-

ing and well-wishing were at an end ; but when dinner-time arrived, Count Maldyn and his son found themselves too much engrossed by the train of domestic images roused by their morning's conversation, to indulge in their usual sociability. Both eagerly hailed the arrival of that twilight hour, when the disturbances of the day subside into confidential tranquillity. The embers were glowing in the stove, and Draunzt had settled himself close beside it for his evening doze, when Adrian, after a meditative pause, abruptly exclaimed,

“ And did you attempt no communication with Abbotscourt Castle, my dear father, previous to your departure for India ? ”

“ To what avail ? ” replied Count Maldyn. “ No sooner did I arrive in Dublin, than I learned that during the year of our provincial seclusion, and from the very period of my marriage, my petulant father had seized every opportunity to harass and molest Lord Templeton in his official career ; and that, on more than one occasion,

he had been at the trouble of petitioning parliament, in order to expose certain petty abuses and errors of judgment by which the lord lieutenant had laid himself open to rebuke. Unfortunately, his lordship's chief vanity lay in his impeccability of office. Priding himself, like many of his species, on his very weakest point, Lord Templeton fancied himself endowed with legislative talents of the first order; and of all the offences that could have been levelled at his character, that of displaying to the world the inefficiency of his administration was by far the most unpardonable. He was one of those persons who prefer the reputation of being a knave to that of being a fool.

“ Perhaps no greater misfortune can befall an official man, than that an enemy should detect a similar foible. Lord Abbotscourt having ascertained the extent of his own powers of persecution, employed his time, his agents, and his money, in seeking occasions for their exercise; and the irritated Templeton found himself un-

remittingly and unsparingly shown up for the diversion of the Irish and English public, till the very name of Maldyn became loathsome to his ears.

“ This intelligence was doubly grievous to me. It served to prove at once the littleness of my father’s character, and the implacability of his anger against myself; and to assure me that I had less chance than ever of pacifying the resentment of the Darleys. Our feuds had become as notorious as the rivalry of the Capulets and Montagues; and as Ireland was at that period roused to the highest pitch of political excitement, it was apprehended that blood would yet be spilt ere the fierceness of their hatred was appeased. As in every other private quarrel of that kingdom at that epoch, politics were made a mask to screen its true motive; and the names of Whig and Tory,—tyrant and slave,—Catholic and Protestant,—were bandied between the Orange party and the Abbotscourt faction, simply because an elopement had disgraced the Temple-

ton family, and because my father chose to resent the silly officious letter of a busy woman.

“ Previous to quitting Ireland, I consulted a young friend or two whom I still ventured to call my own, on the eligibility of attempting a reconciliation between these irritated adversaries; but I was advised that it would be better to try the influence of a short absence on my father’s feelings. Reassured by the certainty that Lady Cecil was once more safely and prosperously settled in the bosom of her family, I resolved to trust to time for the event; and leaving with my agent a letter of explanation and submission to be delivered to Lord Abbotscourt, in case of my death, tore myself from Dublin, embarked at Cork, and ——”

“ And my poor mother—poor Lady Cecil?” exclaimed Adrian.

“ Do not mention her—do not mention her!” faltered the count in a low voice. “ The want of judgment which had marked my previous conduct, was as nothing compared with the folly of

this precipitate departure. It was an act of positive frenzy to leave my wife surrounded by my bitterest enemies."

"But surely," cried the young count, with rising colour and throbbing temples, "surely her own nearest relatives—persons of high station and character in the world—could never be tempted by family dissensions to behave with barbarity towards a helpless woman solemnly bequeathed to their protection?"

"Adrian, Adrian!" replied his father, "various are the disguises under which cruelty dissembles its purposes. Stripes and blows, privation or insult, do not fulfil its worst intentions. It was with a smiling countenance and affable demeanour that Lady Katharine Darley undertook the task of blighting her sister's peace of mind."

"My poor mother!"

"At the time of my embarkation, Cecil was, as I have already mentioned, on the eve of her confinement; and naturally of a nervous and

susceptible temperament, her constitution had been so fatally impaired by twelve months of privation and anxiety, that her mind and body were now equally enfeebled. Apprehensions were entertained for her safety ; and it was at this critical season that Lady Templeton and her daughter-in-law, outraging every better impulse of woman's nature, began to practise upon her weakness by hints of my desertion—assurances that I had eagerly solicited the appointment which ensured our separation—and declarations that I had passed my last few days in Dublin in riot and intemperance. By Lord Templeton's advice I had bidden her farewell, in a slight and cheerful manner, on pretence of proceeding to Abbots-court and seeking an interview with my father. He promised me that the truth should be explained to her by slow and careful degrees ; and eventually confirmed by a letter of which Lady Katharine Darley undertook the delivery, in which, at his suggestion, I acquainted her in the tenderest manner with the sacrifice I found my-

self compelled to make to her welfare.—Adrian !
—that letter never reached the hands of my poor
Cecil !—

“ The levity of my demeanour in our last interview, was again and again pointed out to her recollection ; and thus, finding herself abandoned and believing herself forgotten by one for whose sake she had endured and sacrificed so much, it was not wonderful that she should fall into the most afflicting state of despondency, and eagerly welcome the hour which she trusted would put an end to her blighted existence. Under these circumstances, my dear son—these miserable circumstances—your eyes first opened to the light !—Yet even in the depth of her despair, the appeal of nature wrought its accustomed miracle in your mother’s heart. Cecil had prepared herself to die—had prayed for death ; but scarcely did the first feeble wailing of her infant reach her ear, when the soul within her was changed. A new light of joy and tenderness was kindled in her desolate bosom—life itself became irradiated with the promise of

pleasures hitherto untasted ; nay, in the fulness of her happiness, even the imputed treachery of her husband was forgotten. She did not—she *could* not think evil of the father of her child !

“ For this change of sentiment on the part of Lady Cecil, Lady Templeton’s natural hardness of heart had left her unprepared. But Katharine, like a minister of mischief, was at hand to suggest a remedy ; and it was agreed between them that after a few days—a few days which they judged requisite to secure the feeble sufferer from the perils of any trying emotion—the little nursling which promised to become so sweet a pledge of domestic peace should be withdrawn from her for ever ! They knew that the numberless disorders of infancy would suggest a ready excuse for its disappearance ; and it was arranged that a confidential nurse named Wallace, already enlisted in their plans, should undertake the announcement of its decease, and its conveyance to England. ‘ Be assured,’ was Lady Katharine’s convincing argument, ‘ be assured that my sister will never

be wrought upon to coincide in our views, so long as the existence of their child forms a bond of union between herself and Randolph Maldyn.'

"And what were these views—you are about to inquire? Black, my son, black and iniquitous as the bosom in which they were framed! But let me not indulge in invective; let me rather strive to moderate my indignation while I acquaint you that Lady Katharine's pretended suspicions induced Lord Templeton to acquaint himself minutely with the mode and ceremonial of my marriage with his unfortunate daughter; that an important formality connected with our difference of religious profession was said to have been neglected in our precipitate union; and finally, that the contract proved null and void—and our son, illegitimate!

"This discovery was effected by Lady Katharine, my dear Adrian, many months previous to your birth; so that had Lord Templeton conducted himself on the occasion with the liberality of a man of honour, the last and worst

evil might have been prevented by a second ceremony, anticipatory of the event. But my father's vexatious animosity so roused the demon within his heart, that instead of attempting to forestal the injury inadvertently offered to his house, by legalizing my marriage with Lady Cecil, he lent a ready ear to the suggestions of his worldly-minded wife and her daughter-in-law, that an effort should be made by the family to separate my poor girl from the needy papist with whom she had rashly connected herself. In pursuance of this villanous scheme, the overtures necessitated by our destitute condition were warmly welcomed by the Darley family ;—my commission was procured—my wife received back with graciousness into her paternal home—her heart estranged by the basest misrepresentations—her mind poisoned by the vilest calumnies ;—her infant surreptitiously withdrawn from her arms, conveyed to a strange country, reared in a degraded home ! Such, Adrian, such is the measure of cruelty and wickedness for which the

pride of the Templetons has rendered them accountable !

“ ‘ I can think of nothing but my mother’s sufferings, my father’s injuries ! ’ replied the young man in a broken voice. ‘ And yet I can scarcely believe that even the false witness borne by her parents and sister, would suffice to alienate Lady Cecil’s affections ? ’

“ Fortunately for the triumph of their machinations, a new and unexpected ally was afforded them by the arrival in Dublin of Lady Templeton’s sister ; the wife of a highly respectable, but weak and prejudiced man, deeply imbued with the doctrines of the evangelical church, and as eager in the task of conversion as Father John, or any other devotee of the Roman communion.

“ His influence in the private circle of the castle, enabled him to commune with the bereaved mother, the deserted wife ; and in offering such consolations as the peculiar character of his religious opinions would permit, he did not scruple to attribute my worthlessness to the creed in which I

was nurtured, and to ascribe the death of her child to the shame of its birth. It was a judgment of the Almighty, he said, in visitation upon her presumptuous secession from the church of her forefathers ; and without regard for the wounded delicacy of the gentle and feminine Cecil, he cited the untimely end which befel of old the unlawful offspring of the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

“ In the season of affliction, the threats and promises of scripture assume a double importance in our ears. The mind of Cecil enfeebled by disease and sorrow, became deeply impressed by superstitious terrors ; and readily adopting the misinterpretations suggested by Mr. Perceval’s peculiar views, she learned to tremble at the recollection of her union with a member of the polluted church of Rome, and no longer marvelled at my enormities, or at the heavy judgments which had befallen herself. Within six months after the arrival of Lady Templeton’s evangelical relatives, a packet was despatched to me by his lordship’s man of business, *under the written*

sanction of Lady Cecil, containing a legal decision on the informality of our marriage, and a renunciation on her part of all further intercourse between us. Lady Templeton had taken precautions that this should be the first communication from my wife which reached my hands; her own had been limited to a formal announcement of the birth and death of my child: and, as to *my* letters, be assured that not a line of my writing was permitted to appear in her presence.

“ ‘ My mother imagined herself then to be fulfilling your own wishes, and justifying your own desertion by this formal disavowal of her claims? —Believing that you had wilfully and deliberately rejected her from your heart, surely she may be forgiven for having fallen into the pit dug for her by the deceiver?’ ”

“ Forgiven!—Alas! she was herself the most injured of victims!—Forgiven!—my son! I have long learned to look upon her memory as upon that of a saint and a martyr! But when I first received that horrible missive, without ex-

planation or a single soothing word to lessen my anguish, judge how different were my views of her conduct. From the period of my quitting Ireland, not one line had I been allowed to receive of all the tender upbraidings and wife-like remonstrances addressed to me by my poor Cecil ! till at length, in the desolation of my exile, I accused her of levity, indifference, inconstancy, —infidelity ! In the madness of my despair, I fancied her heart had become corrupted by prosperity ; that the brilliant profusion of her father's court had taught her to despise her beggared husband !—But I disdained remonstrance—I scorned the idea of pleading for a renewal of the connexion she had voluntarily resigned.

“ Still, had it been in my power, had the chances of war permitted me to absent myself with honour from my regiment, I should have flown back to Dublin to assure myself of the legal validity of her opposition to my rights, and to meet with becoming dignity the overtures of Lord Templeton. For the present, however, such a measure was in-

compatible with my professional responsibility; and in the mean time, instead of giving up my whole heart and soul, as I could have wished, to the honourable duties which though thrust upon me fulfilled every desire of my earlier life, I grew daily more incapable of exertion. Existence became a burden to me; and willingly—how willingly—would I have laid it down amid the struggle of the first action in which it was my fortune to engage!

“It has been said that this is precisely the state of mind most propitious to the vocation of a soldier! And such might be indeed the case in the desperate service assigned to me at that critical period; for my advancement in my profession outstripped not only my own hopes, but all former precedent.

“But it is unnecessary, my dear son, to interrupt the details of my narrative by further allusions to my military career:—a subject, from your boyhood till now, so frequently discussed between us without reference to the calamities in

which it originated. You will probably recollect that my patron, Colonel Darley, fell gloriously in the storming of Asulipatam, a few months following my arrival in India; and that, on a cessation of hostilities nearly three years afterwards, I obtained leave of absence for the restoration of my health; an indulgence due no less to the severity of my wounds than to my increase of military rank.

“Alas! alas! how joyful would have been this triumphant return to the land of my forefathers, could I have flattered myself that the prize-money arising from the plunder of Asulipatam, the unanticipated product of my professional exertions, would secure the comfort and prosperity of a beloved wife;—or that in Cecil’s smiles, I should obtain a reward for my sufferings. A thousand times rather would I have remained the obscure and penniless cornet I quitted Ireland, blest as I then believed myself in the affection of a faithful companion, than return to find the weight of my unexpected honours and unsought opulence, un-

shared by a single individual to whom my prosperity was likely to prove a source of gratification. In defiance of the allotted ties of nature, I was now worse than alone in the world!—The only friends I could boast, were a few military comrades endeared to me by the perils we had shared together ; one of whom, an officer of my own regiment, named Manningfield, having been summoned to England by family business, chanced to be the companion of my voyage.”

CHAPTER VI.

Scarce able to believe my journey o'er,
And that these eyes behold thee safe once more,
This—this alone is worth an age of toil!
Hail, lovely Sirmio!—Hail, paternal soil!—
Joy, my bright waters, joy! your master's come,
Laugh every dimple on the cheek of home!

Trans. from CATULLUS.

“EVEN under the happiest auspices,” continued the count, after a pause arising from profound emotion, “it is a terrible ordeal to approach our native land, after a long cessation of intercourse with those whose ties upon our hearts form the true bond uniting us with our country and its interests. The ordinary casualties of human destiny, and the fatal progress of time, acquire a

new and ominous importance when thus connected with the beloved beings, the light of whose countenance has been denied to our eyes; and never shall I forget the vague but oppressive apprehensions that assailed my mind on hailing the coast of Ireland, lest some horrible mischance should have befallen the woman—beloved in spite of all her treachery—who had spurned me from her bosom;—the brother who had renounced me;—or the sister—the dear kind sister—whose presence it was forbidden me to approach. For eighteen months, no intelligence, either public or domestic, had reached me from Ireland; and having once more set foot upon its shore, as an unrecognised and nameless individual, I attempted with fear and trembling an inquiry concerning the families of Templeton and Abbotscourt—both of which I knew must afford a familiar subject of public discussion.

“ Even previous to my departure for India, I was aware that the political as well as personal temper of the lord lieutenant, had attached an

unusual degree of unpopularity to his office, and rendered his name a byword among the people. He was regarded as a personification of the selfish and defying hauteur of his country, and as a privileged enemy of that over which his authority was appointed. It was therefore no matter of surprise to me to learn that the excitement of the public mind had necessitated his lordship's premature removal ; and that the name of Darley was pronounced with avowed detestation, with curses as loud as they were deep. The prejudices of an ignorant and misguided populace aggravated, as you may suppose, their opinions and details of the ruin wrought in the kingdom by the obstinacy of the late lord lieutenant ; but it was with a sigh I remembered how much of that very obstinacy owed its existence to my father's fractious opposition ; and how much of that very opposition, to the disobedience of his son.

“ On venturing, however, to mention the name of Lord Abbotscourt, in the expectation of finding it hailed with the plaudits usually lavished

by the lower orders on those whose injudicious interference in their behalf is the source of their worst grievances, I was answered with indifference that, ‘they had heard nothing lately of my lord;’ and finding that no further intelligence was to be obtained in Dublin respecting the family of Lord Templeton, than that he was resident at his family-seat in the county of Derby, I set off immediately for my paternal estate. I was satisfied that the miserable alteration in my appearance would secure me from recognition in the adjoining village, where I determined on taking up my temporary abode, in the hope of finding some favourable opportunity to attempt a reconciliation with my father.

“ Absence, and that impartial self-examination inseparable from the approach of death, had, during my residence in India, considerably diminished my resentment, and softened my feelings towards him. I had been taught to know that the faults and frailties of a parent should have no existence in the recognition of a son. I remembered his early partiality, his fond confidence in my boy-

hood, his predilection for my society ; and estimating with better judgment the extent of his disappointment at my subsequent disobedience, forgave all his harshness, and resolved to humble my proud spirit at his feet. Now that fortune had placed me beyond the necessity of approaching him as a needy petitioner, I felt it unnecessary to place any limit on my submission.

“ I cannot suppose, my dear Adrian, that this homely residence of Elzstein, an adopted home, without any of the intense claims of nationality on your heart, has inspired you with a just estimate of that fond and partial weakness which attaches the exile to his birthplace. In the petulance of boyhood, I had been apt to inveigh against Abbotscourt as a dreary prison, shut out from intercourse with even such society as an obscure provincial residence might have afforded to a man less affected by Milesian and Catholic prejudices than its hereditary lord ; and had often pointed out a mixture of Gothic pride and Gothic

barbarism in its aspect and customs, as a sufficient motive for my ill-omened residence in the capital. But the desolation of my sea voyage, and the still more painful estrangement from civilized society attendant on a military career in India, soon caused me to renounce this unnatural affectation of refinement; and the solemn gloom of Abbotscourt, with its ancient quadrangles and turrets, its lofty woods and princely domain, had long assumed a sort of religious sanctity in my remembrance. Often during the breathless stillness of an Oriental night, had I summoned these images around me, till the arid sands whereon our tents were pitched became green with the verdure of a happier climate; often, amid the cheerless and objectless dreariness of the waste of waters, had I enlivened the dullness of a calm, by picturing my return to the house of my forefathers,—the blessing wrung from my reluctant father's heart by the humble appeal of a son no less repentant than the prodigal of Scripture commemoration;—often,—often

—had I woken from my dream in the agitation of believing myself locked in his arms!—

“Remembrances such as these, and new emotions still more touching, arose in my bosom while I traversed the well-known road conducting me towards him; and I even forgot to notice and welcome its familiar sounds and sights, in the intensity of delight with which I anticipated the forgiveness of a parent and the renewal of a sister’s friendship. On reaching the confines of the park, I despatched my carriage by a circuitous route to the village, that I might approach the castle without the possibility of recognition.

“How readily do I recal to mind every trivial incident connected with that visit!—I felt and feel it to be one of the most important events of my life!—On passing the footgate connected with the great entrance of the domain, I noticed that the lodge which, during Florentia’s residence at Abbotscourt, had been kept by a *protégé* of hers, and rendered a model of rustic neatness, now afforded a genuine specimen of national disorder.

Its garden was uprooted by the swine that revelled in the filth of the half-ruined tenement; and the bare-legged urchins who stared out upon me as I passed, were as completely strangers to me as I could wish.

“ For a moment, I was startled by this extraordinary change; apprehending that my father’s singular indifference to the aspect of a place which he once prided himself on maintaining with baronial splendour, must proceed from domestic or mental affliction. But it was one of those bright and balmy days in June, which seem to deny the existence of evil; as if the brilliant array of nature were incompatible with the livery of human affliction. The foliage of the woods displayed all the freshness of its early verdure; save here and there an oak whose tardy russet shoots scarcely yet sufficed to disguise its sturdy outline. The hawthorns were white as with sprinkled snow; and their spicy fragrance pervaded the glowing atmosphere, breathing upon

the earth as if to draw new treasures from its swelling bosom. The grass, instead of being cropped into turfen smoothness by the deer which it was my father's pleasure to leave in undisturbed possession of the place, had grown up, and withered in seedy exuberance under the hot sunshine—untouched either by human or animal intrusion; while the whirring wings of a thousand insects flitting among the tall weeds and wild flowers, seemed like the hum of distant habitation, and formed a singular contrast with the manifest loneliness of the place. The sweetness of summer, in short, was around me with all its beautiful renovations and exhilarating sounds; and my heart bounded within me when at length, as I emerged from a shrubbery of larches and acacias skirting the flower-gardens, the mansion, in all its stern and solemn antiquity stood before me. But I shuddered and reeled on the path, when, having glanced towards the massive portal, I perceived it to be surmounted

by a funeral escutcheon bearing the family emblazonments.—I had come too late, Adrian!—my father was no more!—

“ I scarcely recollect how I endured my first consciousness of the event ; my first remembrance is of rising from a bank by the wayside on which I had thrown myself, and advancing towards the house, with a desperate determination to see and hear every circumstance calculated to augment the anguish of my feelings. The day must have passed away during the suspension of my faculties of heart and mind, for the sun was setting gorgeously on the windows as I approached the stately courtyard ; and I now welcomed the wild and disorderly aspect of the place, as consonant with the events with which it was connected, and with the emotions arising from them within my own bosom. At first, indeed, the hoarse echo of my summons upon the barred and ponderous door which had been wont to stand hospitably open during the lifetime of its lord, grated in my ears like a voice of accusation from the

grave ; but when, after many a renewal of the sound, I found myself compelled to seek a more humble mode of entrance through the offices, and encountered only a strange English domestic to whom the care of the premises was exclusively committed, I experienced an inexplicable gratification in the wretched isolation of my position. Regarding me with an eye of suspicion, the man hastened to inform me that Lord Abbotscourt's orders expressly forbade the intrusion of *strangers* during his absence ; that although himself and his wife were the sole inhabitants of the castle, the denuded state of the place *since the sale*, rendered even *their* guardianship superfluous ; for nothing now remained but bare walls to attract the evil-disposed or inquisitive.

“Without inquiring to which class I was assigned by his misgivings, or even explaining the peculiar nature of my interest in the scene, I found means to propitiate the man by a degree of liberality which might well have served to augment his suspicions ; and he not only permitted me to enter the home

of my childhood, but soon proved to me, by ocular demonstration, that the dismantled condition he had described was not a fable invented to serve as his defence against knavery and pillage. Rendered communicative by my retaining fee, he informed me, that since the decease of the late lord, the present representative of the family had only once visited the estate ; when, by giving orders for the peremptory sale of the personalty, including the furniture of the castle, and such of the family plate and pictures as were not strictly included in the deed of entail, he tacitly avowed his intention of quitting Abbotscourt for ever. In reply to my further inquiries, the man stated himself to have been appointed to his office by an English solicitor to whom the absentee lord had recently assigned the agency of his estates ; a personage whose growing unpopularity with the tenants was likely to prove ruinous to the Maldyn family, and perhaps fatal to himself.

“It was neither the present proprietor of the castle, nor his delegates, who engrossed my

interest; but it grieved me to discover that the ill-blood existing between the English bailiff and his Irish neighbours, was not only the motive of his churlishness of demeanour towards myself and every other stranger seeking admittance to the castle, but that it must ensure his ignorance touching the late lord and his family. He knew, indeed, from the report of his patron—the agent of Lord Abbotscourt—that the old man had died broken-hearted, on account of the marriage of his son with an English lady;—but he knew no more.

“ This, however, was enough!—I asked no further questions; and declined the offer I had previously sought, of visiting in detail the desolate abode I had approached with such different anticipations. It would have seemed like sacrilege to intrude into the lonely chamber of the parent I had hastened to the grave—of the sister whom I had rendered an orphan. The very atmosphere of the cold dismantled mansion became oppressive to me; nor could I endure the thought of passing the night in the village, with the risk of hearing

my family affairs discussed by vulgar lips. By the intervention of my astonished companion, my carriage was summoned to meet me at the lodge ; and in the dusk of twilight I recommenced my journey, cheered only by the vague hope of receiving from Mr. Butler, Lord Abbotscourt's agent, who had been driven by the ill-usage of the tenantry to reside in Dublin, a clue to the residence of my sister, and a less dispiriting picture of the family affairs. Of my father, I dared not even think ! I felt myself incapable of pronouncing his very name. The guilt of the parricide was heavy on my soul ! ”

“ ‘ Do not distress yourself by reverting to these agonizing details ! ’ exclaimed Adrian, perceiving that the lips of the count were quivering with emotion. ‘ Tell me, in one word, whether your interview with my uncle’s man of business was satisfactory ; and—’

“ *One* word, my son, will scarcely suffice to unravel the numerous interests connected with my visit to Mr. Butler ;—in whom I instantly re-

cognised, with amazement, a person employed in a very menial capacity by Lord Templeton, during his viceroyalty. Astonished to find the patronage of my brother bestowed upon any man connected with the family from whom I had received such bitter insults—such cruel injuries—my inquiries concerning the welfare of the present Lord Abbotscourt were sufficiently slight and cold, while my reception of his agent's obsequious familiarities, probably tended to betray the motive of my reserve. But, without noticing the fellow's air of pique, I hastened to speak of Florentia, and even incoherently uttered the name of Wrottesley.

“ It was now *his* turn to assume a tone of coldness and reserve. I must excuse him, he said, from entering into any particulars concerning persons, whose conduct towards his lord had been the cause of so much scandal and dissension. He knew nothing more of them than that they had recently set off for Italy, where the state of Mr. Maldyn's health required them to pass the

winter; for further details, he referred me to Lord Abbotscourt, and tendered me the address of his London abode.

“I had very little inclination to loiter in Dublin—a residence to which a thousand painful associations were attached by the conduct of the Templeton family; and though I would have given worlds to obtain information respecting the being who—to my shame do I own it—was still dearest to my heart, I had not courage to articulate her name in Butler’s presence. Immediately on quitting him, I made arrangements for my departure from Ireland; and, within a few days from this unsatisfactory interview, installed myself in a fashionable hotel of the British metropolis.

“In London, my acquaintance was of course even less extensive than in my native city; but having been compelled immediately on my arrival to accept a visit from my friend, Colonel Manningfield, for the discussion of important professional business in which we were mutually interested, we agreed to dine together; and I re-

solved to defer till the morrow, my visit to Lord Abbotscourt. Nothing indeed resembling brotherly cordiality, had ever subsisted between us ; and the recollection of Florentia's warnings touching the enmity of Father John had so long rankled in my heart, that I could not but involuntarily refer to the same origin the misunderstanding described by Mr. Butler, as existing between his lordship, my brother and sister. I *knew* that the latter was my friend, and had reason to suspect that the former was my enemy ; and my only object in seeking an interview was to obtain the desired intelligence respecting Florentia, and some insight into the general state of our family affairs. Although my poor father had publicly announced my disinheritance, I had claims on the Maldyn property, which though slight were inalienable.

“ Meanwhile my friend Colonel Manningfield, having noticed during dinner the depression of my spirits, renounced his intention of passing the evening at the Opera, in order to bear me com-

pany; while I, finding it doubly irksome to endure his restless flow of spirits, proposed in my turn that we should visit the King's Theatre together;—the noise and animation of a place of public resort are at all times less oppressive to the feelings than the vivacity of a single companion. On our way to the Opera, Manningfield casually announced that he was in possession, for that evening, of the box of his sister, Mrs. Fitzgerald; and as we were making our way leisurely along the passages of the theatre, his eyes became directed towards the names of their female proprietors which, according to the English custom, are affixed above each several door. ‘Lady Abbots-court?’ he exclaimed—reading aloud, and pointing out one of these superscriptions to my notice; ‘Maldyn! you never told me that your brother had married during your absence?—I suspect you have this morning been introduced to the bride; and that your unusual melancholy arises from the loss of your prospects of inheritance—eh! my dear fellow? Must you subside for

the remainder of your days into the beggarly obscurity of a younger brother's destiny?—Come—come! After all, you may as well return with me to Bengal, and pursue your way towards a yard of red ribbon, and a liver-complaint. *A quelque chose malheur est bon*; you have lost your estate and the king has gained a soldier. But tell me, is your new sister-in-law pretty, agreeable, fascinating; and if so, cannot we present ourselves in Lady Abbotscourt's box, instead of climbing up into my less fashionable sister's attic altitudes?

“However reluctant to acknowledge my total and almost suspicious ignorance of the domestic position of my nearest relatives, I was now obliged to confess that till that moment I was wholly unaware of my brother's marriage.

“‘Come then,’ cried the volatile Manningfield, ‘since we are not privileged to obtain a sight of this fair unknown by the commonplace method of turning the handle of a door, let us hasten to acquaint ourselves at a respectful distance, whether

the house of Maldyn derives any accession of beauty from this mysterious alliance, *Voyons!* her ladyship's box is situated next to that of my beautiful friend the Duchess of Cardigan. Come with me into the pit; and I will point out your sister-in-law to you in a moment.'

"Mechanically I followed his directions; and in a few moments found myself standing in the lobby beneath; while Manningfield, directing his glass from tier to tier, at length discovered the object of our curiosity.

" 'There!' whispered he, fixing his eyes as he spoke on a lovely woman, magnificently but fantastically arrayed. 'The lady in the purple dress with her hair drawn back from her ivory forehead, is the Duchess of Cardigan; and the beautiful creature in the box to her left must consequently be the new Lady Abbotscourt.'

" 'Percy,' he continued, addressing a fashionable young man who stood near, 'you who are the court calendar of this breathing world, reveal to us the name of yonder charmer in the diamond tiara?'

“ ‘ Talking to Russell of the Guards? Is it possible that you do not know Lady Abbots-court?—the ascendant star of fashion—the——’

“ I heard no more!—Judge, Adrian,—judge of my feelings on recognising in my brother’s wife the features of—Katharine Darley ! ”

CHAPTER VII.

The sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds,
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds. j

SHAKSPEARE.

“MY first emotion on recovering from the shock of this discovery, was gratitude for the chance which had prevented me from visiting my brother’s residence, and finding myself unexpectedly in the presence of his wife : my second arose from the possibility—the remote chance—that this new connexion between the Darley and Maldyn families might reveal to me some favourable change of feeling on the part of Lady Cecil, or even some explanation of her antecedent conduct. But the

last, and best, and only pleasing certainty suggested by the marriage of Lord Abbotscourt, was a persuasion of its fatal influence on my father's mind. I felt assured that it was my brother's unaccountable renouncement of his family principles, and not my own, which had hurried our mortified parent into the grave.

“ But how to account for that renouncement—that sudden change? *My* brother, the most bigoted member of the church of Rome,—opposed almost unto treason, to the representatives of English sovereignty in his native land—*my* brother, to espouse the offspring of a man of the high church, and high Tory school, such as Lord Templeton!—It was incomprehensible!—Far better could I understand the motives of the Darley family in sanctioning this strange alliance, and marking a due distinction between the Catholic Lord Abbotscourt, with an estate of twenty thousand a-year, and the Catholic Randolph Maldyn, his younger and disinherited brother; and with respect to Lady Katharine herself, I doubted not

that her own inclination to the match, had been in no small degree excited by the triumphant supremacy it must afford over myself.

“At first I was puzzled to decide whether my brother would affect to maintain his resentment towards me, on the original grounds of my having sought an alliance with the abhorred family of Templeton; and whether the offences imputed by his agent to Wrottesley and Florentia, had any reference to myself. In this uncertainty of the state of his disposition, I felt reluctant to address him in a tone of brotherly affection; and by way of ascertaining the character of his intentions, contented myself with leaving my card at his residence on the following day.

“The formal announcement of my arrival in England produced, however, no result; and even when repeated, to prevent the possibility of mistake, Lord Abbotscourt deigned not to take the slightest notice of my visit. I had unfortunately no family connexions in London, whose interposition could procure me the information I

sought, without the humiliation of a further appeal to my ungracious relative; and it therefore became necessary to address myself to him by letter. But to my inquiries respecting Florentia's present abode, no answer was vouchsafed.

“ I had already placed my friend, Manningfield, in my confidence; and now besought his advice respecting the further measures to be taken.

“ ‘ I have little doubt,’ was his reply, ‘ that Lord Abbotscourt's amiable wife is the origin of the mischief, and that she has been the evil genius of your destiny throughout its changes. But what is to be done? I cannot carry a hostile message between brother and sister, any more than between brother and brother; and pacific overtures seem out of the question. What say you to addressing the lady yourself, and on neutral ground?—Let us return to-night to the Opera, and if you have courage to enter her box, she cannot refuse to answer your questions. Or, shall

I accept the introduction proffered me by my friend, Sir Henry Percy, and act as your ambassador extraordinary ?’

“ ‘ Perhaps,’ said I, ‘ it will be better to trust to my own eloquence in an affair of so much delicacy. This artful woman would never forgive me for having confided to a third person, a family feud of so peculiar and complicated a nature. But the Opera is too public a spot to provoke the scene which may ensue between us.’

“ ‘ No, no !’ cried Manningfield. ‘ *Artful* women are never provoked into scenes. This sister-in-law of yours has too much self-possession to be betrayed into hysterics; nor have you the least chance of exciting so much as a paltry fainting-fit, unless with a view to rouse your brother’s indignation against you. But fear nothing on that score : I have already ascertained that Lord Abbotscourt never makes his appearance at the Opera.’

“ I still demurred ; but the irritation produced by my anxiety respecting Florentia, even-

tually determined me to hazard the attempt. On the following Saturday, having secured for my use an opposite box, from which I could inspect that of Lady A., and ascertain the propitious moment for intrusion, I took my seat at an early hour; and had soon the satisfaction of noting her ladyship's entrance, accompanied only by a beautiful boy, of about three years old. Seating him on her knee, she caressed him with such an air of maternal tenderness, and exerted herself so earnestly for his amusement, that but for the certainty that her union with my brother was scarcely of a year's standing, I should have believed him her own. Such a witness was at least no obstacle to my purpose; and summoning all my courage, I prepared myself to meet unmoved her utmost scorn and indignation; and, accordingly, desired the box-keeper to admit me to her presence.

“Mistaking me for one of the intimates she was accustomed to welcome on such occasions, Lady Abbotscourt turned courteously towards the door,

as I stepped beyond the crimson curtain; when, perceiving that the darkness of the box prevented her from recognising the intruder, I strove that my voice should announce me, by uttering a few cold words of salutation. But there was neither indignation nor scorn—neither artifice nor dissimulation—in the start of terror and suppressed shriek with which she marked her consciousness of my presence, or in the rigid immobility into which she subsided on my proceeding to address her. In the agony of her trepidation, she even strained the child by which she was accompanied closely to her bosom, as if in the belief that its innocence would protect her from some actual danger.

“ ‘Do not imagine, Lady Abbotscourt,’ said I, with the view of reassuring her, ‘that I am here to upbraid or molest you. My brother declines all intercourse with me; and I have no means of acquainting myself with the welfare of a brother and sister, who I trust are more kindly

disposed towards me, unless through *your* interposition.'

" Instead of uttering a word in reply to this address, Lady Abbotscourt grew paler and paler, and was so evidently on the verge of insensibility, that pity took place of disgust in my bosom. Her respiration was impeded, and the tears began to steal through her half-closed eyelids; yet she attempted not to withdraw herself from public observation—a proof that her emotion was unfeigned and all-absorbing.

" ' Katharine ! ' said I, compassionating her distress, ' we were once friends. Speak to me, I conjure you. Forget, for a moment, how deeply you have plotted against my peace—forget my widowed pillow—forget your sister's injuries and my own—forget every evil thought you have cherished against me—forget my sentence of banishment—my alienation from my father's death-bed;—and tell me where I may find the friends whose arms are yet open to embrace me. Where is Florentia Maldyn ? ' "

“ Still she replied not !—Gasping for breath, and bewildered beyond all recovery of her self-possession, she seized my hand, and by her incoherent expressions of tenderness, betrayed at once that she was guiltless of all participation in my brother’s unkindness, and that she had been kept in ignorance of my arrival in England.

“ ‘ You do well to hate me,’ cried she, among a thousand other exclamations equally inexplicable, ‘ for I have injured you beyond your worst suspicions. You first excited my tenderness, Randolph, by the rash warmth of your professions,—you deserted me,—scorned me,—transferred before my eyes your affections to another. Could I bear this,—could I witness your mutual happiness without attempting to avenge my own cause? Randolph! while my heart bled for every pang inflicted on yourself, I ceased not from my task of vengeance! I deprived you of your wife, your child, your country, your birth-right. I drove you into exile,—I rendered you hateful to her who loved you,—I provoked your

father's curse,—I wedded with one who was loathsome to me, only to obtain a mastery over your destiny. I have it,—I hold it,—I have loved, and I can now abhor, as never earthly woman loved or hated. But do not accuse *me*. It is you who have done this ; it is you who have instigated all my errors, all my crimes ; you alone are accountable,—and upon your own head, and the heads of all who are dear to you, has the measure of retribution fallen. Amid the flush of my worldly prosperity, dearest Randolph, my heart is broken, and my soul accursed ; and you alone must bear the penalty of both.'

“Awed by the concentration of voice and almost maniacal vehemence with which Lady Abbots-court gave utterance to these terrible confessions, I sank into a chair ; while the child—the boy—whom she had now removed from her bosom, involuntarily betrayed his alarm by burying his little face in the folds of her dress. But no sooner was she sensible of his terrors, than she snatched him into her arms, and covering him with kisses,

wept aloud ; till at length the reality of her emotions so far wrought upon my commiseration, that I advanced towards her, and would have taken her hand. Deride my weakness, Adrian, if you will ; but I own that the sight of Lady Abbotscourt's tears obliterated from my mind all remembrance of my own injuries. Yes ! I advanced towards her, and would even have taken her hand.

“ ‘ Go—go ! ’ she faltered incoherently, repelling the attempt ; ‘ the time is past for reconciliation ; a gulph, an eternal gulph is placed between us ! The hatred of the betrayer for the betrayed, no less than the horrible relationship in which we stand, condemns us to perpetual estrangement. Go ! Randolph Maldyn, go ! it will not lessen the measure of your brother's detestation to know that we have exchanged even these sentences of mutual upbraiding ; Lord Abbotscourt has betrayed some discernment in seeking to prevent all further intercourse between us ; although

others might have scrupled to expose the detected weakness of a wife.'

"A new light broke in upon my mind as she uttered these words. My brother's want of common courtesy towards me might, indeed, proceed from his detection of Lady Abbotscourt's fatal partiality; and I could almost forgive the abhorrence, which a man of his intemperate passions must necessarily conceive under such circumstances. His jealousy was far more excusable to my feelings than the unbrotherly coldness I had ascribed to him.

"Hastily rising from the seat I had usurped, as this new view of his conduct presented itself, I obeyed the injunctions of the unhappy woman before me, and bade her a hurried farewell; resolving to seek some other mode of acquainting myself with the situation of my family. I own I was touched when, as I quitted the box, the child by whom Lady Abbotscourt was accompanied, raising its innocent face from her shoulder,

as she bowed haughtily at parting, greeted me with a smile of the gentlest interest, and uttered a few infantine words of adieu. But when I had quitted the presence of his patroness, I forgot even his ingratiating countenance and courtesy, in my regret that I had not found courage to utter the name of Cecil, and inform myself of her welfare. Although it was her pleasure to reject the hallowed bonds by which we were once united, and to become towards me as a stranger, *I* could not forget that for twelve happy months she had pillowed her head on my bosom,—had loved me, had laboured for me with more than the tenderness of a wife. She had ceased to be mine, indeed, but I felt that I was still *hers*, and hers for ever.

“ On the following day I was still more inclined to lament my false delicacy on this point, when rallied by Colonel Manningfield on the ill-success of my mission. ‘ I do not wonder,’ he observed, ‘ that the Darley family should glory in loading you with acts of injury and oppression, since you

choose to repay them with such acquiescent patience. A few ready tears have disarmed your best resolves; and I have learned more of your family concerns from vulgar rumour, than you have been able to force—either by menaces or concessions—from the lips of your perverse sister-in-law.’

“ I implored him to explain himself; hoping that these allusions might refer to Wrottesley and my sister.

“ ‘ Nay!’ replied Colonel Manningfield, ‘ I have discovered only what all the world besides yourself appears to know; that your brother’s connexion with Lady Katharine Darley commenced in his advocacy of your own cause. On arriving in Ireland, it appears that Mr. Maldyn and his younger brother were pleased to resent the conduct held towards you by Lord Templeton on occasion of your union with his daughter; and that in the course of certain interviews of explanation which arose between them, his lordship had not only the art to persuade them he

had acted towards you with almost paternal indulgence, and had reluctantly profited by the informality of your marriage in compliance with the religious scruples recently conceived by Lady Cecil, but to engage Mr. Maldyn's attentions for her sister. Many persons believe that Templeton was prompted to this measure by a desire to thwart and harass your father; but the heir of Abbotscourt was also an object worthy the solicitude of the flighty Lady Katharine Darley; who, moved either by your brother's personal attractions, or by some other latent motive, spared no pains to subjugate the haughty young Catholic.'

"Nor can I wonder at the success of the attempt. Katharine in her happier moods, is as captivating in her address as she is beautiful in her person; while my brother's natural reserve places him at the mercy of any woman, who will be at the pains to exert herself for his attraction. His vain self-confidence, too, must have tended to throw him off his guard.

“ ‘ His vain self-confidence sufficed to persuade him that Lord Templeton’s daughter was dying for love of him, and that it was his duty as a *preux chevalier* to sacrifice himself in her favour. But after having actually committed the rash act—after renouncing his indignation on your behalf—driving his old father to distraction—and perpetuating a breach with your brother and sister, I fancy, he has found occasion to recognize his error. Lord and Lady Abbotscourt are supposed to live on the most unhappy terms; and since the birth of her little girl, he has been heard to reproach the mother with a degree of bitterness, which promises little for the future harmony of their *menage*. Were it not for the splendid fortune Lady Abbotscourt will inherit from her father, he has little reason to exult in his inconsistent choice; but while she is able to increase his rent-roll by estates to the amount of thirty thousand per annum, even the Papists of his party forgive him that base desertion of his principles, which tends to augment the importance of their tribe.’ ”

“ ‘Forty thousand per annum !’ I exclaimed. ‘ You forget, my dear Manningfield, that Cecil Darley’s renunciation of her husband has sufficed to restore her to her father’s favour ; and that while my disinheritance was the consequence of our transient connexion, it has wrought no evil in her destiny.’ ”

“ ‘ Such, however, is not the opinion of her nearest relatives. Lord Templeton, it seems, had fully persuaded himself that after his success in invalidating her marriage, Lady Cecil would at some future period consent to reappear in society, and lend herself to the aggrandizement of her family, by forming some more propitious connexion.’ ”

“ And may she not still fulfil these disinterested expectations ? ”

“ ‘ Unfortunately for Lord Templeton’s views, he consented to employ Perceval’s intervention, in order to disunite his favourite child and the son of his enemy ; and—’ ”

“ Perceval! *who* is Perceval ? ”

“ ‘ How ?—during your domestication in Lady Templeton’s family, had you the good fortune to escape your share of her brother-in-law’s pious documentations ?—Perceval, my dear Maldyn, is the high-priest of the ultra-godly in the Dublin world ; and was precisely the person who drove your father to distraction by announcing (prematurely as it now appears) your brother’s conversion to the evangelical church. But with respect to his influence over Lady Cecil Darley, I can scarcely satisfy you. Nothing seems known in the London world, except that she has secluded herself from all society since your departure for India, and is now residing in the strictest retirement at Havresbury, her father’s mansion, in Derbyshire ; declining to join even its family circle, and studiously shunning the observation of visitors.’ ”

“ And Lord Templeton himself ? ”

“ ‘ Is said to have received a severe shock on hearing that the dying words of Lord Abbots-court denounced a solemn curse on himself and

his children. Already stung to the quick by the circumstances of his removal from the lord-lieutenancy, it is probable that he would never have attempted a re-appearance on the stage of public life: but since the period of Lady Katharine's marriage, and its fatal influence on the mind of his ancient adversary, he has not even visited the metropolis. Instead of pursuing his schemes for the establishment of his favourite daughter, Lady Templeton and himself appear to have renounced the aspirings of their worldly-wise ambition; and to limit their pleasures within the park paling of Havresbury.

“ I did not venture to acknowledge to Colonel Manningfield the extent of my interest in these details; nor the wild and visionary hopes they excited in my bosom. To know that Lord Templeton's character had undergone so singular a revolution, that his political violence had been quelled by the decease of the opponent by whom it had been chiefly stimulated, while his views for Lady Cecil's aggrandizement were frustrated by

her obstinate self-seclusion, was sufficient to inspire me with a chimerical idea, that he might eventually reconcile himself to our connexion. The family which had withdrawn its religious scruples in sanctioning the union of Lord Abbotscourt with Lady Katharine Darley, could no longer affect to regard with horror the difference of profession existing between myself and Cecil; and even the original obstacle, my poverty, although magnified by subsequent disinheritance, was in some degree removed by the lucrative successes of my military career.

“ With respect to her own disavowal of our union, I had ever flattered myself that an undue influence must have been exerted over her mind to produce such a miraculous change of feeling; and satisfied by the mode of life she had adopted, that she was guiltless of all intention, such as in the bitterness of my disappointment I had been tempted to impute to her, I trusted,—I hoped,—I even believed—that her feelings might secretly incline towards me. She was now relieved from

the mischievous influence of Lady Katharine's society, of Mr. Perceval's arguments; even Lord and Lady Templeton had experienced a change of position highly favourable to my views; and at length I persuaded myself that I should only fulfil a duty towards all parties concerned, by taking some measure to ascertain the nature of Lady Cecil's sentiments. Recalling to mind the thousand precious instances of her former attachment, and connecting them with her present renouncement of the world and its pleasures, I presumed to indulge the hope that she might have repented her concurrence in the hostile measures of her family,—that she might have learned to regret the man whose devotion had been so fondly her own,—that in her widowed solitude she might still regard me with interest,—with affection.

“No sooner did this flattering delusion obtain possession of my mind, than I resolved to visit Havresbury, demand an interview of Lord Templeton, and with the frankness of a soldier lay before him the state of my own feelings and my

own fortunes. I felt that he could not refuse me access to the presence of his daughter ; nor pursue a system of persecution towards one so closely connected with the son-in-law he had courted into his family. My father's death, and my brother's marriage, could not fail to secure me against all further injury from the house of Darley."

CHAPTER VIII.

Hadst thou thy wits and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus !

HAMLET.

THERE was one inconsistency connected with Count Maldyn's personal revelations which, as it may be imagined, produced the most painful perplexities in the mind of his son. The invalidity of his marriage, and the consequent illegitimacy of the child born to Lady Cecil Darley during his campaign in India, appeared incompatible with the tone in which he affected to treat the claims of Adrian ; and burning with anxiety to

reach that point of explanation in his father's history which he still trusted would suffice to remove the stigma from his birth, and the struggling sense of shame from his soul, the young count had need of all his self-command to abstain from those inquiries which must still further aggravate his father's distress.

For some time, indeed, Count Maldyn appeared unequal to a renewal of his narration; but at length the anxiety visible in the countenance of his son urged him to a desperate effort, and in a subdued voice, he resumed the course of his explanation.

“It was not till I approached the confines of Havresbury Park,” said he, “that I became fully sensible of the trying nature of the task I had undertaken. In the first happy season of my admittance into Lord Templeton's domestic circle, while I was sunning myself in the smiles of his beautiful daughters without a suspicion of the influence that both were likely to obtain over my future destiny, one of our favourite topics of discussion was the spot I was now about to visit.

Whenever I ventured to cite in their presence the beauties of my native country, the scenery of Avoca or Killarney, Cecil would smilingly stand forth as the champion of her own Derbyshire, and Katharine half angrily assert the unrivalled charms of their English birth-place. Havresbury had been their residence during the life-time of their mother; and the cold and repellent disposition of the present Lady Templeton soon gave them ample reason to lament their happy childhood and its home. But in the course of my still more intimate association with my dearest Cecil,—of my wedded year of mingled pain and rapture,—how familiar did I become with Havresbury and its scenery! How often, in the wretchedness of our narrow home, did she cheer her spirits by affecting to initiate her half-savage Irish husband into the polished and peculiar habits of an English country residence; how often, during the continuance of her father's harsh estrangement, and amid the heaviest privations of our penury, did she recur with regret to the condition of his poorest

tenants, and wish, with a melancholy smile, that Lord Templeton would vouchsafe us some humble tenement among the picturesque vallies of her native county !—So familiar had her descriptions rendered me with all its scenery, that on approaching Havresbury, I fancied myself returning to some long-lost home. As I recognised the various haunts her eloquence had formerly brought before my eyes, I felt as if gazing upon *her* face, or listening to *her* voice. It was like the re-perusal of a favourite page of poetry once known by heart !

“ Yet every pleasing emotion, every sanguine anticipation, deserted me when I found myself on the threshold of the library in which, under the formal announcement of ‘ a gentleman on business,’ I was about to enter the presence of my father-in-law. I had prepared myself to encounter with patience and forbearance any want of courtesy in his mode of reception ; and to invite, by my facility in overlooking his former misdoings, a gradual progression towards mutual

reconciliation. I was almost willing to acknowledge *myself* the offender, rather than irritate him anew by compelling him to appear in the wrong. Summoning to my remembrance the lofty bearing and supercilious countenance worn by Lord Templeton during our last interview, I advanced towards the table beside which he was seated.

“His first glance was one of mere indifference ; but the exclamation of surprise and sympathy which burst from my lips as I noted the alteration in his own person, revealed me to him in a moment.

“ ‘ Randolph Maldyn ! ’ he exclaimed, clasping his withered hands together, and gazing piteously in my face, ‘ alive, in England !—alas, what evil destiny has brought you hither ? ’

“ For many minutes I found it impossible to reply to this apostrophe. There was something in the tone of Lord Templeton’s voice, and the change in his appearance, which touched me to the soul. It seemed as if the influence of my

father's dying curse were already operating upon him ; as if the blight of a premature old age had dried up the current of his blood. On my departure for India, I left him in all the vigour of manhood ; stern, erect, florid, and portly. But his hair was now silvery white—his figure bowed by feebleness—his brow careworn and sallow—his voice tremulous, his eye dim ; an age of sorrow appeared to have rolled over his head ! As I said before, there was something irresistibly touching in his appearance ; and I could scarcely refrain from tears while, having seated myself unbidden beside him, I entered into a hurried explanation of my errand.

“ It was some time before he attempted to utter a syllable, but sat concealing his face with his hands, as if unwilling to betray, in my presence, the extent of his embarrassment. At length he inquired, but with a countenance still averted, whether I was aware of Lord Abbotscourt's union with his daughter ; and in reply to the question, I acknowledged that it was from the sanction be-

stowed by him on that very alliance I derived my chief encouragement to visit Havresbury.

“ ‘Would—would to Heaven !’ he exclaimed, in a broken voice, ‘that you had previously sought an interview with Katharine or her husband.’

“ ‘Lady Abbotscourt’s demeanour towards me, during the short period I ventured to intrude upon her presence,’ said I, ‘was little calculated to encourage my confidence. I know her to have been grievously my enemy during my ill-omened connexion with your lordship’s family ; and have now learned from her own lips that she glories in the fact.’

“ Lord Templeton seemed startled by this assertion ; and a thoughtful expression tempered the previous anguish of his countenance. ‘But surely, Mr. Maldyn,’ said he, attempting to recover his self-possession,—‘surely you did not announce to *her* the *motives* of your journey hither. Surely Katharine had not the cruelty

towards both yourself and me—to promote your visit to this house of mourning?’

“ ‘Again too late!’ I exclaimed, clasping my hands together, in sudden despair. ‘My lord!—it is you who have done this!—*you*, who condemned me to that banishment from my native country, which alienated me from my father’s death-bed and has admitted my return only to weep over the grave of my beloved Cecil. My lord! my lord! it is you who have done this.’

“ ‘Mr. Maldyn,’ replied Lord Templeton, wearing in the venerable dignity of his grief a far more imposing air than had ever invested his person among the trappings of his viceroyalty, ‘I can forgive your violence—ay!—and even your injustice; for I know that you loved my child—my dear child—my afflicted child. But spare me the fruitless misery of listening to the recapitulation of your wrongs. They have been bitterly repented—heavily atoned; and nothing now remains for us but to bow with humble sub-

mission to the dispensation of the Almighty. When I was persuaded to insist on the illegality of your contract with my daughter, I knew not the motives of those who were so eager to prove its invalidity, nor the fervour of the attachment by which you were united. I was taught to believe that the levity of your own character and the submissive docility of hers, would soon reconcile you to the separation, and incline you to seek elsewhere a more proportionate alliance ; I dreamed not—I guessed not that the curse of a broken heart was about to cleave to my house. Yet I ought to have been spared my present trial. It was the duty of Lord or Lady Abbots-court to acquaint you that Lady Cecil Darley's present state of mind is such as to forbid all possibility of your reunion.'

“ Believing the afflicted father to refer to the religious scruples which had been described to me as originating in the influence of Mr. Percival's peculiar opinions, I assured him that I was fully aware I had difficulties to contend with,

and was prepared to wait with patience some favourable turn in the mind of his daughter, ere I profited by his sanction to renew my claims upon her hand. Lord Templeton, still more surprised and distressed by this declaration, persisted in assuring me that the case was hopeless. ‘You cannot,’ said he, ‘have been made acquainted with the full extent of the evil.’

“Again I represented that time might do much in such a case; that time and my own assiduous attentions might counteract the effect of her early vexations. ‘Have I, my lord,’ I inquired with increasing eagerness, ‘have I your permission to make the attempt?’

“Lord Templeton shook his head mournfully.

“‘If you have courage to see her,’ was his reply, ‘I will myself conduct you to her presence. One moment’s interview will suffice to satisfy you of the groundlessness of your expectations.’

“Rising from the library table beside which we were sitting, but with an air of reluctance and mortification visible in his countenance which I

attributed to his secret opposition to my views, the old man motioned me to follow him, and led me through a splendid suite of apartments and a succession of intricate passages, towards a narrow staircase.

“ ‘Would it not be better,’ I whispered, my whole frame trembling with emotion at the idea of finding myself in Lady Cecil’s presence, ‘to announce our visit?—Shall we not startle her by this intrusion?’

“ ‘But instead of replying to my interrogation, Lord Templeton took a key from his pocket, and carefully unlocked a door in the corridor we were traversing.—I started!—Was I about to visit a *prisoner*?—or did his lordship entertain a design against my own liberty?’

“ ‘Wallis!’ said he, in a low subdued tone, to an elderly woman employed in some household occupation in the chamber we now entered, ‘Is she asleep—can we be admitted?’

“ ‘The woman moved on tiptoe towards an inner room, and having opened the door and surveyed

the interior with an air of anxiety, nodded an affirmative ; when Lord Templeton, taking me by the arm as if to support his own feeble frame, led me into the chamber of his unfortunate daughter.—Adrian ! an ominous chill palsied my heart as I approached that fatal spot.

“ It was a large airy chamber, destitute of all furniture but a bed and a few chairs ; and for a moment I was unable to discern the person of its inmate. But the gratings affixed to its lofty windows, and the presence of a man of harsh and peculiar aspect, immediately revealed to me the origin of its desolate nakedness :—I was standing in the retreat of a maniac !

“ “ Let us leave this place ! ” I faltered, staggering towards the wall ; while Lord Templeton, with clasped hands and rigid features, stood by like a person who has inured himself to some habitual penance. But at that moment the sound of my voice penetrated the ears, the heart, the mind, of the wretched sufferer ; and rising from the obscure corner into which she was cowering

in the attitude of some irrational being coiled up for repose, she crept stealthily towards us, and gradually assumed something of a human attitude:—as she raised herself to confront us, her long hair, unbraided and uncurled, fell like a veil round her person till its tresses swept the floor. Involuntarily I recoiled as she advanced, for it seemed as if the grave were giving up its dead; the fixed glare of her glassy blue eyes, and the inexpressive immobility of her features, were corselike and terrific. But her attendant attributing my retreat to personal fear, now lifted up his hand forbiddingly to arrest her approach; assuring me in the harsh, callous tone of his calling, that ‘she was quite harmless.’ Judge of my anguish, Adrian, on hearing such words uttered in her unconscious presence, without a chance that her feelings should be wounded by the announcement.

“Unaccustomed, however, to the afflicting spectacle, I could not forbear commanding the fellow to silence; and once more the sound of my voice

produced a startling effect upon the unhappy being before me. She drew herself up as if to listen; a gradual hectic overspread her face, which had previously worn the paleness and opacity of death; and at length a smile, a wild and unnatural smile, broke over her features.

“ ‘Do you hear him, Katherine?’—said she, in a hollow voice. ‘I told you he would come again; I always said he would come again, and bring me food and clothes. He was half famished when we parted;—and there was scarcely straw for our bed;—and my father refused us bread. What could he do, poor fellow?—He went out to *beg*, Katherine—to beg for his wife and child; but I always said he would come again.’

“ ‘Compassionating Lord Templeton’s emotion, the attendant—*the keeper*—approached Lady Cecil with the view of terrifying her into silence. “ ‘Molest her at your peril!’ I exclaimed, while a burst of tears relieved my overcharged feelings.

“ ‘There again!’ cried the maniac, with an incoherent laugh; ‘said I not that my true

champion would one day appear, and relieve me from my house of bondage, and bring my father and his cruelties to shame?’

“ ‘Maldyn!’ faltered the agonized Templeton, ‘you have satisfied yourself of her condition; let us quit this dreadful spot!’

“ ‘I cannot leave her!’ I exclaimed, half frantic with the excitement of the moment. ‘You once compelled us to part, and leaving her prosperous and at ease, I was quiescent. But I will not abandon her in this hour of affliction. Resign her to my care; I will watch over her, tend her, soothe her—ay! and love her with all the tenderness I once vowed to her in the presence of God. Give her to me again, Lord Templeton,—and all her former sacrifices shall be repaid by my devotion to her now in the day of her humiliation.’

“ ‘The gentleman does not know what he undertakes,’ interrupted the keeper, with a contemptuous laugh; and he began to enter into a thousand disgusting details respecting his un-

fortunate charge. At that moment Lady Cecil herself involuntarily justified his accusations of her occasional violence by rushing upon him in order to silence his statement; but just as her uplifted arm was about to fall on his head, a single glance of his eye sufficed to awe her into tranquillity:—again she stood pale and trembling before him.

“ ‘Fear nothing,’ said I, addressing her in a soothing voice; ‘no one shall touch you—no one annoy you.’

“ ‘A sort of hissing, gibbering laugh mingled with her reply.

“ ‘You do not know that man; you do not know the ways of this place. See!’ she whispered, disentangling her arm, still fair and lovely, from the long tresses in which it was enveloped; ‘look at these bruises—these stripes. They care not how they beat me, so they can prevent my crossing the sea to tell Randolph I am still his wife. First came Katherine with her malignant slanders against him, piercing my heart while she

smiled in my face;—then came Perceval, the priest of Baal, with his menaces of hell and judgment;—and my father with his scornful pride, and Lady Templeton with her cold austerity;—and they took my babe from my bosom, and put a fiend into its place; and I nourished the imp on my life's blood till it grew into yonder monster.—They tell me it was Randolph sent it hither to punish me for having listened to his enemies!—But Randolph was never stern and cruel like the rest of them; and just now I seemed to hear his voice, and I hoped he was coming to set me free.'

“ ‘I *am*—I am come to set you free!’ I exclaimed, clasping the unhappy creature in my arms. ‘Do you not know me, Cecil! Do you not recognize your husband?’

“ ‘I have no husband!’ she answered, trying to disengage herself from my embrace. ‘Once I was married to Randolph Maldyn; but Prophet Perceval said that such marriages were sinful in the sight of Heaven—and so they brought

me to this prison for the remainder of my days ; and now they beat me and starve me as a punishment for—but you are weeping !—Why should you weep for poor Cecil ?—Katharine will murder you when she discovers that you pity me. Come closer, that I may hide you with my hair, and she will not find you.’

“ ‘ My beloved—my own—my only Cecil !’ I exclaimed, again folding her to my bosom ; ‘ Randolph is indeed come home to alleviate your sufferings ! Randolph is by your side—at your feet ! Look upon him—recognise him, dearest !—and all will yet be well.’ ”

“ The unwonted tone of tenderness in which these words were pronounced appeared to touch anew that invisible chord which my voice had already caused to vibrate. She dragged me towards the window, and putting back her hair from her face, perused my features with the most searching earnestness. She uttered not a word ;—scarcely breathed ;—while, as she gazed upon my well-known lineaments, reminiscences of the past

gradually dawned upon her mind. At length tears came into her eyes, and rolled slowly over her wasted cheeks; and placing her deathlike hand upon my forehead, she appeared to pronounce an inward benediction. Still she spoke not;—and the vivid flush which for a moment had overspread her countenance subsided into a livid paleness doubly appalling.

“ ‘Place her on this chair! lay her on the bed!’ suddenly exclaimed her attendant, rushing towards her, as she was on the point of falling to the ground, ‘Open the doors—the window—give her air, or it will be too late!—she is dying!’ cried he, applying his fingers to her pulse. But instead of obeying his commands, I hung over her recumbent figure, chafed her hands within my own, and imprinted on her quivering lips a thousand kisses of hallowed and agonized affection. The breath of life was departing from them; but in that last tremendous struggle of nature, I saw that I was fully recognized. Her closing eyes were turned in tender-

ness upon me, and with a perfect restoration of every faculty. There needed no words to tell me that she knew me—that she loved me—that she would willingly live for my sake.—But it was not to be!—A fatal spasm impeded the powers of life—the heart ceased to beat—a horrible sound sobbed from her throat. Why do I speak of this?—She died, Adrian! she died!—Just when new hopes were dawning around us, the overwrought sensibilities of that delicate frame were snapt asunder. In a few minutes my arms encircled the breathless remains of my wife!”—

CHAPTER IX.

Chè lo spirito lasso
Non poria mai 'n più riposato porto,
Ne 'n più tranquilla fossa
Fuggir la carne travagliata, e l'ossa.

PETRARCA.

“WERE I to seek throughout the world a spot sanctified as if by the especial favour of Heaven, wherein to deposit those precious reliques,” resumed Count Maldyn, after a pause, during which he appeared absorbed in a mental recapitulation of every circumstance connected with the fatal event, although too deeply abstracted to give utterance to the detail, “it would have been that very church of Havresbury, to which it was

the pleasure of Lord Templeton that they should be consigned. Unwilling to draw the attention of the neighbourhood towards the unhappy destinies of his daughter, it was decided that her interment should be immediately solemnized in the most private and unostentatious manner, without even the attendance of his household or tenantry. For myself, I was too much overpowered in mind and body by the agitating scene in which I had recently borne a part, to be consulted on the subject. In spite of Lord Templeton's remonstrances I persisted in occupying the chamber adjoining my Cecil's desolate retreat, till her remains should be removed to a last and more peaceful home ; and in the stillness of the night, when those who watched by her coffin were overtaken by the heaviness of sleep, I hung over it,—I communed with her, and breathed a vow I have held sacred, that no other wife, no other woman, should ever replace her in my bosom.

“ But on the evening preceding the ceremony, when the hirelings connected with its details be-

gan to pollute my solitude by investing it with the trappings of funereal array, I quitted the chamber—the house; and bending my steps across the park towards the valley where a spire rising above a grove of beautiful beeches revealed the position of the church of Havresbury, I attempted to render my eyes familiar with the future resting-place of my beloved.

“ Situated within the confines of the park, upon a rocky knoll, at the foot of which a shallow brook ran murmuring towards the channel of the Derwent, the venerable structure was sheltered on the northern side by a grove of lofty trees, now enriched by their utmost luxuriance of summer foliage. The paths leading to its boundaries, which were unfrequented as an ordinary village haunt, gave it the appearance of standing in a grassy field; and all was softness and tranquillity around. At the extremity of the valley, the entrance towards a narrow defile through which the waters of the brook seemed to have forced a way, was marked by a barrier of cliffs half clothed with stunted

pinetrees; and beyond these, nothing was visible but the clear atmosphere and its floating summer clouds. There was not a sound nor a breath to interrupt the holy harmony of the scene.

“With every thought and every feeling absorbed by its auspicious loveliness, I stood beside the low stone wall separating the church-yard from the domain, contemplating the solemn antiquity of the little church, which stood an enduring and unbroken seal of the covenant between God and his people—an unviolated pledge of the stability of the Christian faith. To such a temple, even though devoted to the ritual of Protestant worship, I felt willing to bequeath the ashes of one who had imparted to a few short steps of my earthly pilgrimage the foretaste of a better land; when, perceiving that its portal was still unclosed, I nerved my courage to enter and gaze on the gloomy cavern about to receive so precious a deposit. I conceived that some person connected with Lord Templeton’s establishment had been stationed in the church to prevent

unprivileged intrusion; but on reaching the chancel, above which a variety of monumental trophies, bearing the emblazonments of the Darleys, proclaimed the vicinity of their mouldering remains, I was struck by the venerable figure of Lord Templeton himself,—kneeling beside the rails of the altar,—and praying aloud with uncontrolled fervour,—that the cup of bitterness might pass away from him and from his race.

“Unwilling to intrude on his devotions, I remained motionless till he rose and advanced towards the mouth of the family vault, already laid open for the ceremony of the morrow; then slowly and reverently followed. ‘My son!’ said he, instantly recognizing his partner in affliction, and extending his hands affectionately towards me, ‘we are well met here, in the presence of the dead—in the house of God—in the mansion wherein I shall soon set up my rest. The worst sins of my mortal pilgrimage have been connected with you and yours; and methinks I could sleep more peacefully in yonder

desolate grave, were I to hear my forgiveness pronounced by the lips of a Maldyn. Randolph, your father breathed a solemn curse on me and on my race ;—you have witnessed in part its consummation ;—you have seen my young and innocent child bowed down to the dust—you will soon hear of my own departing struggle. Vouchsafe me the consolation, Randolph, of knowing that your enmity will not outlast that hour : promise me that you will return hither and lay my grey head in the grave beside that of Cecil.’

“ ‘ You have still a daughter, Lord Templeton,’ said I, sternly.

“ ‘ I have still a son, if you do not spurn the title ; had Cecil been restored to me, she should have rendered it a distinction precious in your eyes. But *her* hour has struck—my own is approaching ; and fervently have I prayed, and earnestly do I trust, that in *our* destinies the judgment may be accomplished. Henceforward may the enmities of the houses of Maldyn and Darley subside into the holy charities of family union.’

“ My heart and lips could not refuse to sanctify this prayer of peace and goodwill at such an hour—in such a spot ;—but an involuntary impulse whispered to me that an atonement might yet be demanded of a future generation.

“ As we returned together in mournful companionship towards the house, Lord Templeton declared himself unequal to attend the ceremony of the morrow, and expressed his regret at my obstinate determination to be present. He even reminded me that the rites of the Protestant church could be but as a mockery in my sight.

“ ‘ My lord ! ’ said I, with firmness, ‘ you have been pleased to declare that it was your intention to sanction my re-union with your daughter. Grievous has it been to me to restrain the expression of my indignation against those by whom she was hastened to the grave ; do you, in turn, abstain from opposing my wishes, and permit me to supply your place in the funeral procession.’

“ ‘ Be it as you will ! ’ was his reply ; and in

the grey morning twilight I once more entered the little church of Havresbury, and beheld the stone of the sepulchre rolled back to receive the dead. But notwithstanding the precautions taken by Lord Templeton to render the solemnity private, the day and the hour were noted by many to whom the childhood of Cecil Darley had been endeared by her beauty and gracious disposition, and her maturity by a thousand acts of mercy and beneficence. Unbidden and undesired, the tenants had gathered together to follow her to the grave; and many an honest tear was shed, and many a grey head uncovered, when one who had been dead to them for years was brought forth once more into the light of day on her passage to the tomb.

“But there was one among the mourners assembled by that solemn rite, whose presence I as little anticipated as desired. Lady Abbotscourt, warned by express of the dissolution of her unhappy victim, had hastened down to Havresbury: and it was perhaps the expectation of her arrival

which had instigated Lord Templeton's anxiety that I should absent myself from the funeral service. I did not note her, indeed, among the muffled mourners by whom the aisle was crowded ; but on turning from the vault, Adrian, into which your mother's coffin had been lowered, my seared and dilated eyes encountered those of Katharine. Scarcely did I attempt to control the emotions of abhorrence with which her presence inspired me ; and I saw her shudder and conceal her face in her mother-in-law's bosom, as she marked the ferocity of my glance !

“ But with her and hers I had nothing now in common ; and hastening from the church door at the conclusion of the ceremony, was soon on my way to London.—Alas ! what new lessons of anguish had been inflicted upon me during my short absence !—Even the gay and thoughtless Manningfield was startled into sympathy on beholding my care-worn countenance, and listening to the tremulous tones of my voice ; and finding me bent upon an immediate departure for Naples, where,

according to Lord Templeton's intelligence, I found that my brother and sister were settled for the winter, he would not suffer me to undertake the journey alone. His leave of absence extending till the following spring, he had still several idle months at command ; and now kindly affected a sudden eagerness to make the tour of Italy, in order to become my companion. My health was indeed in a precarious condition ; and I had soon occasion to recognize the truth of Manningfield's assertion, that I was not fit to travel without a companion. Never did I close my eyes for the night, but the afflicting scene at Havresbury rose before them in all the intensity of reality ;—again the incoherent laugh of Cecil rang in my ears—again her ghastly smile thrilled through my soul—again she seemed to point out to my commiseration the wounds and bruises by which she was disfigured. And in the paroxysm of distress which followed these horrible visitations, I had often reason to acknowledge the value of the soothing counsel of a friend. Colonel Manning-

field, roused from his rest by my frantic exclamations, would listen patiently to the outpouring of my despair, and attempt to restore my reason by gentleness and expostulation. He was a kind comforter to me, Adrian, in all my affliction; but I had still a kinder and a better—even that Almighty Father whose hand is over all his children !

“ It was no matter of surprise to me to learn, on arriving at Naples, that my brother and sister had quitted it; for I had begun to believe myself environed by a spell of fatality ensuring the frustration of all my wishes, the disappointment of all my hopes. Manningfield had many friends among the English visitants; and a near connexion attached to the mission, from whom I ascertained without difficulty that Mr. and Miss Maldyn had been many months resident in the city, where they associated chiefly with its Italian circles; but that they were gone to pass the autumn and winter on the coast of La Puglia with the family of Prince Bagnaglori. It ap-

peared that Wrottesley had been scarcely visible to his countrymen, excepting in the public drives and walks; for his sacred calling, and the infirmity of his health, alike prohibited his participation in scenes of ordinary dissipation: but Miss Maldyn had occasionally attracted public admiration by her appearance at St. Carlo with the Bagnagloris. The intelligence I gained respecting them, though far from unsatisfactory, was not sufficiently detailed to allay the eagerness of my anxiety; and being unwilling to deprive my friend of the gratification he had promised himself in reviewing the city and its monuments, I succeeded in persuading Manningfield, after a few days' sojourn at Naples, that my strength was sufficiently restored to admit of a solitary excursion. After obtaining his promise to rejoin me in the course of the autumn, I set off for Bajabella.

“The chances of my eastern campaign had somewhat familiarized me with the wild and wonderful,—whether in scenery or its human popula-

tion ; yet I own I was strangely impressed by the savage simplicity of Calabria and La Puglia. Austere devotion, or rather the superstitious bigotry which usurps its place in ignorant minds, seemed to have affixed an iron limit to the perceptions of the people ; the humanized inhabitants of our provinces in the east were incomparably more advanced in civilization than these denizens of one of the loveliest kingdoms in Europe. But I forgot all my astonishment at their brutality in the surprise with which I gazed on the beauty of the land, on approaching its southern coast. My mind was scarcely susceptible of agreeable impressions. I looked upon the earth, and saw that it was good ; but what were to me its loveliness and fertility ? I hastened onward through its picturesque scenery, to refresh my eyes with the sight of those dear familiar faces, whose aspect, although it could not renew in me the love of life—might render the last stage of my pilgrimage less painful and less desolate.

“ The evening which brought me to Bajabella, Adrian, was bright with that unruffled and cloudless serenity which imparts to Southern Italy a character of almost poetical fascination; and a climate justifying those pictures of pastoral existence, which are estimated by the inhabitants of our less genial country as the exquisite creations of a Theocritus or a Virgil. The rude mountain roads by which I had penetrated to the coast were now exchanged for woodlands of the most romantic beauty; where the dark and glossy evergreens of the south, the bay, arbutus, and ilex, were contrasted with the lighter verdure of the chestnut, and variegated masses of underwood; and it was on emerging from these shadowy groves, which seemed to lend reality to the idealisms of mythological fiction, that the Palazzo Bagnaglieri, planted on a rocky eminence overlooking the waves of the Mediterranean, stood before me. Thrown out into prominent relief by the calm blue waters and calm blue sky against which its lofty outline was defined, I was

strongly impressed by the dignity of its Palladian architecture, and the magnificent style of the approach leading landward to the platform of rock on which it was erected.

“ Quincunxes of lofty trees were planted at regular intervals on either side the paved causeway; and within a mile of the grand entrance, these were interspersed, at corresponding intervals, with magnificent pedestals of marble, bearing colossal statues.

“ In this and other specimens of aristocratic residences in Italy, there exists a character of nobleness accordant no less with the beauty of the land, than with the mightiness of its ancient name; but affording an almost ludicrous contrast to the humiliation of its present condition, and the debased nature of its population. Such palaces as those of Florence, such gardens as those of the Roman villas, although uncharacteristic of a free and manly people, are at least worthy of the refined, the opulent, and the luxurious, the restorers and fosterers of ancient art;

and only serve to exaggerate the tone of littleness and the habits of meanness peculiar to the degraded nobles of modern Italy ;—those pigmies encaged in mockery among the temples of the Titans. The Palazzo Bagnagliori, for instance, was a structure worthy the throne of the Cæsars ; but wholly unfitted to the revenues of an obscure Calabrian baron, incapable of maintaining among the squalid and impoverished vassalry of his domains, that feudal pomp and privilege, originally won by his ancestry in the fierce struggle of the Angevine wars. On a nearer inspection of its lofty façade and magnificent quadrangle, the defeatures of time, and a general disregard to the decencies of civilized life, soon dispelled the illusion of its *coup d'œil*. An air of loneliness and dilapidation about its courts and corridors was almost as dispiriting as that of the dismantled castle of Abbotscourt ; while the little fishing town of Bajabella, sloping on terraces of the cliff towards the shore beneath, might have vied in its disorderly wretchedness with any village on the Maldyn estates.

“ But all this was far more in unison with the state of my own feelings, than the splendour I had at first anticipated. Having received no answer to the letter announcing to my brother and sister a visit from their long estranged and perhaps forgotten Randolph, and grown experienced in the lessons of adversity, I checked the warm emotions of my bosom lest they should be met with the coldness of worldly formalities, or perhaps be crushed at once by the still severer shock of mortal bereavement.—Every human thing seemed gradually deserting me !—Had I yet a brother ? did Florentia still survive ?

“ As we paused beneath the lofty portico waiting the arrival of the domestics so scantily provided in the niggardly households of the Italian nobles, I succeeded in repressing the palpitation of my heart sufficiently to frame my inquiries touching the English family resident with the prince ; and contrived to follow the aged menial who presented himself, across a gigantic marble hall emulating the vestibule of some enchanted

castle. But when I found myself ascending a lofty staircase towards the suite of apartments described by the old porter as occupied by the 'noble foreigners,' a sudden recollection flashed across my mind of my visit to Havresbury,—and my presentiments on the threshold of its fatal cell. —My heart grew sick;—and as I clung to the gilded balustrade, my vague apprehensions were tranquillized by total insensibility."

CHAPTER X.

I have no home, no kin,
No kind—not made like other creatures, or
To share their sports or pleasures.

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED.

“IT was only from the tears shed upon my hand by the lovely woman who held it clasped in her own, that I knew myself—on recovering my bewildered senses—to be in the presence of my sister. I was lying on the sofa of a lofty saloon; where the uncertain light dispensed through the closed jalousies served to disguise the mouldering antiquity of its hangings, and the faded ghastliness of its frescoes. By my side knelt the gentle Florentia,—in silence and in tears,—and my

brother? I strained my dazzled eyes round the vast apartment in search of Wrottesley. Again my heart sunk within me as I dreaded to find myself alone with the sister I loved.

“ But no!—*he was there!*—My brother was there; and although I knew not how to interpret the emotion which kept him aloof from my couch, I felt that my *own* blood was throbbing in his veins, my *own* name attached to his destinies, and was satisfied that the call of nature would soon summon him to my arms.

“ But was it indeed the companion of my childhood who turned his cadaverous face from the wall against which he had been leaning, when I faltered out the name of Wrottesley, and extended my hands imploringly towards him?—Pale, attenuated, bowed by the feebleness of premature decay, the wasted figure which obeyed my call was clothed in an ecclesiastical robe; and had acquired a foreign air which I could not immediately reconcile with those impulses of consanguinity so warm within my own bosom.

“ ‘Speak, dearest Wrottesley!’ I exclaimed ;
“ ‘speak, that I may know my brother’s voice.’
But alas ! the hoarse and hollow tones which replied to my eager invocation, were scarcely less changed than his outward aspect.

“ ‘Till this day,’ interrupted Florentia, compassionating our mutual distress, ‘ we knew not of your coming ; or I should have gone forward to meet you by the way. But the communication with this secluded place is uncertain ;—so uncertain, that it is only a few days since we first heard of your arrival in Ireland.’

“ ‘ We believed you—we hoped you to be still in India,’ said my brother, striving to recover his composure ; ‘ for alas ! there was ample reason to suppose you might have already ceased to exist. Three years have elapsed since we were comforted by the sight of your hand-writing ; and the disastrous chances of the late war, though known to us only through the newspapers, were such as to justify a gloomy view of the case. But it is now many months since even these reached

our hands ; and I had begun to renounce all expectation of meeting my brother on this side the grave.’

“ ‘ Do not sadden our re-union by painful retrospects,’ said Florentia. ‘ Let us remember only that it is five years since we parted ; but that we *have* met, and I trust to part no more. We may yet live for each other and be happy.’

“ The word ‘ happy ’ sounded gratingly on my ear ;—even with the hands of my dear Florentia and Wrottesley united in my own. ‘ My first steps on the path of life,’ was my involuntary reply, ‘ have been appointed in a rugged career. Many are the scars and heavy the weariness it has left ; I may live to become *resigned*, Florentia, but I cannot again be *happy*.’

“ ‘ My brother,’ said Wrottesley, in the same low sepulchral voice, and devoutly crossing himself, ‘ in resignation to the will of Heaven, lies our best happiness, our best virtue. Amid the crowd of cities, we acquire other aspirations and wider

ambition ;—but *their* result is emptiness and strife.’

“ There was something in the solemnity of Wrottesley’s manner, which — although myself labouring under depression of spirit—seemed unnatural and oppressive. His youth—the buoyancy of disposition, for which he had been formerly so remarkable, seemed blighted by some preternatural operation ;—and the feebleness of his frame to have arisen less from disease than from the withering influence of mental anguish. *I* had suffered more than falls to the lot of most men ;—had braved the hard life of a soldier, the perils of an unwholesome climate ; had endured the pangs of absence, of exile, the galling sense of injury,—the loss of all I loved,—the triumph of my enemies. My hair was grizzled, and my cheek furrowed by the iron which had entered into my soul ! But Wrottesley’s locks, where they had escaped the tonsure of his sacred calling, were still black as jet, and clung closely to the clammy brow whose sallow and hollow tem-

ples they overhung;—and his lips, though parched with fever, retained even in their mournful rigidity a character of extreme youthfulness. His countenance was that which we attribute to the fallen father of mankind;—still young, still beautiful, but withering beneath the consciousness of sin. It was a relief to me when he quitted the room, that I might converse with my sister unrestrained by his presence.

“Much indeed had I to relate, and much to inquire:—my father’s death-bed—Lord Abbots-court’s marriage—my own most bitter fortunes;—what themes for sorrow, for interest, for accusation! And yet it seemed unfair to repress the impulses of delight which beamed on my sister’s countenance at this unexpected meeting with her favourite brother, by reverting to our common sources of affliction. I even forbore to question her concerning Wrottesley’s prospects and condition; and gave my whole attention to her animated expressions of joy, and anticipations of future comfort in my society.

“ ‘ Why should we not settle in Italy ? We are not rich, but we have enough for happiness, my dear Randolph,’ she exclaimed. ‘ This land is a land of plenteousness ; and surely Bajabella and its enchanting landscapes are preferable to the dreariness of Abbotscourt. The peculiarities of my father’s opinions fortunately prevented my forming connexions in my native country, such as might cause me to regret Ireland ; and as to my poor brother, I am persuaded he has renounced all interest in his birth-place. It is long since he has permitted me to name either his home or family in his presence.’ ”

“ ‘ But the Bagnagliori ;—*I* cannot intrude into the household of your Italian friends ?’ ”

“ ‘ You do not know the habits of this country,’ said Florentia, smiling at my scruple. ‘ We are only visitors *à la mode d’Italie*. These apartments are our own for the time being ; and although I doubt not you will find in Princess Bagnagliori and her daughter Dorothea agreeable

friends and acquaintance, you are to consider yourself as Wrottesley's guest and inmate.'

“ These terms did but increase my satisfaction at finding my family settled in seclusion, instead of amid the tumult and dissipation of Naples ; and I soon felt at home, and capable of enjoying those sisterly attentions on the part of Florentia, and that spontaneous interest on the part of my brother, which nothing but close kindred can originate. I had been three days an inmate of the palace, had visited all Florentia's pensioners and protégés in Bajabella, and wandered with poor Wrottesley among his favourite haunts along the coast, before I even beheld the venerable princess and my sister's friend Dorothea. At length, having left us ample time for our family colloquies and revelations, they complimented my arrival by a visit of etiquette to Florentia ; and never had I found so strong an occasion to mark the peculiarities of our national character, contrasted with those of continental nations, as

in replying to the harassing interrogations of the good old lady. Her inquiries extended to the most delicate subjects; and a thousand questions which, while alone with my sister, had trembled on *my* tongue ere I gave them utterance, were asked, and answered, and forgotten with easy indifference by her garrulous curiosity. ‘Did I intend to return to India?—to settle in Italy?—to renounce my profession or choose another?—was I a good Catholic and a loyal subject?—married or single?—a father or childless?’ It was in vain that Florentia attempted to stop the current of her old friend’s volubility. ‘It was strange,’ the princess kept repeating, ‘that neither the Count Abbotscourt nor Wrottesley had mentioned to her the existence of a third brother, during their first sojourn in Italy; so much as she had talked to them of their country and relatives, and so much as they had said in their turn of the charms and excellencies of the amiable Fiorenza.’ And it was actually from my sister’s answers to her inquisitive guest, that I discovered

how much treachery had been exercised to seduce Wrottesley from his brotherly affection towards me; that our mutual letters had been invariably intercepted; and that his first knowledge of my marriage and banishment, as well as of her own immurement in a provincial Irish convent, had been obtained on his return from the continent, a few months prior to my father's death. Yet it appeared, that even such distorted details of these facts as were to be gathered from public report, aided by Lord Abbotscourt's invectives, and the accusations of Father John, had sufficed to rouse the indignation of my brother in my behalf; and I was now able to discover, from the reluctant and incoherent answers vouchsafed by Miss Maldyn to the princess, that my elder brother's marriage had originated in some family dispute undertaken in my behalf.

“ ‘ And your younger brother's anxiety to pronounce his vows at Rome, and his increasing infirmity of health, would not permit you to remain in Ireland, and await the arrival of Signore

Capitano ? What a pity !—or you might all have travelled together. But then I should have missed the happiness of having you with me during the past winter !’ said the venerable gossip to my sister, adjusting our family affairs, and her own pinch of snuff, with the same easy *non-chalance*. ‘ Ah ! India is a sad place,’ she resumed ; ‘ a land of barbarism and atrocities. We Italians seldom travel so far ; nay ! are seldom to be found out of our own country. But why ? Lavished around us, we have the corn, and wine, and oil, which others go so far to seek ; while in England, I am assured that the commonest productions of the earth can scarcely be forced into cultivation ! No wonder you are tempted to perform such journies and voyages, to catch a glimpse of the sunshine.’

“ She might have talked for ever, now that she had anchored on a topic of general interest, unmolested by interruption or molestation from Florentia or myself ; but Dorothea, mortified by her mother’s involuntary rudeness, attempted to

turn the conversation by inquiries concerning India—a country all but apochryphal to an Italian understanding. Her mother, however, soon managed to repossess herself of the lost ground ; and before I had the honour of re-conducting her to her own apartments, and receiving a general invitation for future visits, she had managed to acquaint me, that her daughter was betrothed to a young baron of the Valvassone family, then on his travels with her own young son, Prince Bagnaglori ; that had it not been for this engagement, she could have been well content to unite her with my elder brother, ‘ the reigning ’ Lord Abbotscourt—with whom they had become intimately acquainted during his stay at the Court of Naples ; that my sister was an angel, and my brother Wrottesley a saint—much more of a saint than he had promised to become when he originally presented himself in her Neapolitan circle ; and too *much* indeed—since it was by no means necessary for a man of his family and fortune to be so strict in his professional observ-

ances, and shut himself up among the Franciscans of the Bajabella Friary, instead of coming occasionally to chat with herself and Princess Dorothea. Unable to evade her importunities, I promised to become his substitute, and accompany her daughter and my sister in their walks and riding excursions; but I felt my spirits wholly unequal to such a sacrifice, and returned to Florentia's saloon wearied and ill at ease; and anxious only to prosecute those inquiries to which her friend's rapacious curiosity had directed my attention.

“ But on many points of our family affairs, Florentia still remained as ignorant as myself. ‘ We parted, my dear Randolph,’ said she, in answer to my questions, ‘ with the promise of constant intercourse and a speedy re-union. But scarcely had you quitted the castle, when my hopes were destroyed by my poor father’s commands that I should hold no further communication with his rebellious son; and on Father John’s subsequent discovery of my attempt to infringe these harsh

orders, I was conveyed to Kilkenny, and resided there in total ignorance of all that was going on in my family, till a few days previous to the death of our unfortunate parent. Never shall I forget the state of excitement in which I found him on my inauspicious return to the castle ! On the arrival of my eldest brother and Wrottesley from Italy, it had been his first object to vindicate his conduct towards yourself, and engage them in his own intemperate opposition to the Templeton family; but in the course of Father John's representations on the subject to his favourite and ally, my brother Maldyn, some inexplicable circumstance transpired which determined both my brothers to visit England—whither the Darley family had retired—and seek a personal interview with Lord Templeton. The result you know !—and the speedy announcement of my brother's union with Lady Katharine was the first hint of the motive and destination of their journey which reached my father's ears. In his frantic resentment he wrote to me as his sole

remaining child, summoning me home to the castle. But it was only to witness his frenzy—to shudder over his death-bed; nor did I behold my brothers from the period of their departure for the continent till the day which re-united us for the mournful ceremony of his interment.’

“ ‘ You must have been painfully startled by the alteration in Wrottesley’s appearance ?’ said I. ‘ For my own part, I own I can trace no analogy between the joyous and confiding friend of my boyhood, and the reserved and gloomy recluse of Bajabella.’

“ ‘ They bear, indeed, but a slight resemblance !’ replied Florentia, with a mournful wave of the head ; ‘ far less than even my impetuous brother Randolph, to the kind, gentle, and considerate Captain Maldyn.’

“ ‘ Your brother Randolph has been trained by the harsh discipline of adversity into his present tameness ; every plague that Heaven could rain upon my head has been successively my portion : but Wrottesley has suffered no bereavement, save

in the ordinary course of nature. Wrottesley has been doomed to no privation, save those self-inflicted by the austerity of his religious observances.

“ ‘ You are right !’ said my sister, in answer to these arguments. ‘ Yet the reality of his sorrow is as undeniable, as it is difficult of justification. Every day his health declines, though untouched by any definite disease ; every hour his mind becomes more abstracted from human interests, though unoppressed by any real affliction. He is infinitely changed since we quitted Abbotscourt. At that period, my poor brother was subject to attacks of nervous agitation, and subsequent debility, which often made me tremble for his reason ; but since his residence in Italy, and more especially since we inhabited this secluded place, he has gradually sunk into his present condition of calm and habitual melancholy. Even your arrival has done little for him beyond the excitement of the moment.’

“ ‘ He embraced his sacred calling at his own

instigation,' I involuntarily observed. 'Can it be that he repents those vows which alienate him from the softer ties of human nature—from pursuits more congenial with his age?'

" 'Impossible !' faltered my companion, crossing herself at the bare sound of this sacrilegious suggestion. 'It is only since my father's death, and at the sole prompting of his own inclinations, that Wrottesley pronounced his final vows. His object in visiting Italy was less the re-establishment of his enfeebled health, than the accomplishment of this important duty.'

" 'Still I do not understand,' said I—— but my further interrogations were interrupted by the entrance of their object; and although I had pre-determined to avow to him my uneasiness respecting his condition of mind and body, I was involuntarily awed into silence by the spectacle of his unnatural solemnity. Instead of presuming to speak to him of himself or his own affairs, the evening passed away in interrogations on his part touching the spiritual and intel-

lectual enlightenment of the oriental nations I had visited ; and he seemed much affected when I acknowledged that there were still interior provinces of the peninsula to which the light of the Gospel had not yet penetrated. ‘ It would be an office worthy an Apostle,’ said I, ‘ to convey the benefits of redemption to the darkness of such a land. ‘ To live and die in the discharge of so trying a duty might avail perhaps as *an act of expiation!*’ he replied ; and the ordinary sternness of his voice was broken by an involuntary sigh.

“ Meanwhile our intercourse with the Bagnaglieri family partook of the languor of my own state of mind. When the confusion occasioned by my sudden arrival had in some measure subsided, Florentia indeed resumed her habits of affectionate familiarity with the princess, and spent a considerable portion of every morning with Dorothea, engaged with music or needle-work, or the labours of benevolence ; but it was my habit to devote these hours to study, or ra-

ther to the silent and solitary reflexions which I fancied myself to be evading by literary application; my books lay neglected before me as a mirage of blessed reminiscences rose before my eyes! It was therefore a matter of heartfelt rejoicing to the sociable old lady, to hear that the presence of Colonel Manningfield was soon to enliven our circle; and when, on his actual arrival, she found in him a handsome, animated young man, speaking several European languages with elegance and fluency, and elaborately versed in the latest gossip and scandals of Naples, she soon learned to regard him as very superior to any of the three brothers of her favourite, ‘Renziellina,’ *a nom de caresse*, she had bestowed upon Miss Maldyn. Previous to his arrival, I own a hope had crossed my mind, that my sister might be inclined to join in this preference; and that Manningfield—one of the noblest and bravest fellows that ever drew breath—might sympathise in my own opinion of Florentia’s excellence. But I would not dwell on the idea, lest by interesting

myself too warmly in the subject, I might ensure its defeat ; I felt myself destined to disappointment in every serious expectation of my life. This prudential resolve secured me from the peevishness of mortification, when I perceived, shortly after Colonel M.'s appearance at Bajabella, that it was to Princess Dorothea his attentions and admiration were directed. I knew and warned him of her matrimonial engagement ; and felt half inclined to apprise the princess, her mother, of the perils she suffered Dorothea to encounter, by encouraging her intimacy with a man so attractive as Manningfield ; for since she was irrevocably destined to become the wife of Count Valvassone, it was unjust towards all three to court the probabilities of a dangerous attachment. But in spite of my secret predictions of evil, music-parties, boating-parties, and excursions into the forest, still went on. Manningfield seemed to forget India, and renounce his professional ambition, while, in the stillness of the evening twilight, he sat under the trellices of

lemon, jessamine, and magnolia, overhanging the terraces of the palace-gardens, with his eyes fixed on the soft and saddened countenance of the young princess. I was too proud for my sister to venture on those expostulations which I fancied might betray the disappointment of my anterior views. Applying all my own energies of mind to the entertainment of Florentia, I laboured only to prevent her from bestowing too much of her attention on the supposed admirer of her friend.

“ It had more than once occurred to me, that the secret affliction undermining the heart and health of Wrottesley might proceed from a similar source. Notwithstanding the cold inaccessibility of his demeanour, I had succeeded in extracting from him that Maldyn and himself had passed the greater portion of their former stay at Naples in the society of the Bagnagliori family ; the elder prince being then alive, holding a high post of honour at court, and maintaining a noble establishment on this important addition to his hereditary revenues. But there were two elder

daughters at that period gracing his domestic circle, who were more likely than the youthful Dorothea to have attracted his attention ; one of whom was resident at Madrid as the wife of Count Pignatelli, ambassador from the Neapolitan court ; while the other, Princess Camilla, now wedded to Prince Monterosa, lived in retirement on her husband's estates near Gaëtà. Unwilling to distress my sister by exciting her suspicions on such a point, I strove to elicit some intelligence concerning them, by directing my inquiries to Princess Dorothea herself ; but my utmost efforts could only ascertain, that Countess Pignatelli was the most volatile of coquettes,—Princess Monterosa, a rigid devotee ; and judging from my own feelings, I deemed it impossible that either should have attained so profound an influence over any human heart as that exercised by the object of Wrottesley's imputed attachment.

“ How strange—how passing strange—the reluctance which renders it so difficult to address a

person with whom we live in the confidence of individual affection, on any subject involving the impulses of human tenderness! Day after day did I converse with Wrottesley Maldyn on the holiest of mysteries—the most appalling responsibilities of mortal nature; but I found it impossible to turn towards him with the simple inquiry of ‘My brother, how hast thou sinned?—My brother, whom hast thou loved?’ I would have given worlds for courage to force his confidence, that I might obtain the means of pouring comfort into his soul! It was grievous to me—blighted as I was in my own destinies, and shut out from the best interests of existence—to be denied the consolation of sympathising in his distress.

“But time was passing rapidly away! The purple clover with which the plains were clothed on my arrival at Bajabella, had given place to the rude surface of their winter fallows: the golden sheaves of the maize hung suspended from the eaves of many an out-building, while its

stunted and parched stalks disfigured the adjoining fields. The plantations of elms adorning the avenues of Bagnaglori were growing dun and autumnal in their foliage; and every evening the fishing-vessels rode close at anchor in the little bay before the approach of twilight, in terror of equinoxial storms. The princess was already busy with preparations for her departure for Naples, to pass the winter season; and though she had failed in shaking our resolution to brave the desolation of La Puglia for some months longer, I fully prepared myself for Manningfield's declaration, that he must bid us farewell and accompany Dorothea. I was pondering within myself over the moment and manner he would probably select for the announcement, as he sat one afternoon by my side in a fissure of the cliffs near Bajabella, which we were all in the habit of frequenting, to overlook the wide level of the Mediterranean; when seeming to wake from a long reverie, he suddenly exclaimed, 'And in a few months Valvassone will make his ap-

pearance, and *then* what will become of her?’

“ ‘ She will unite herself with the man selected by her family to receive her hand,’ said I, coldly. ‘ We are not now in England, where the vague and often guilty impulses of the heart are allowed such overweening influence. In this country, no contract is valid if unhallowed by the sanction of those whom God and man have set in authority over us—our parents and our prince. Dorothea is too gentle even to dream of rebellion ; and he who would disturb the tranquillity of so soft a bosom, emulates in my eyes the sin of Satan, who first imparted to our first parents in their guiltless Eden the lesson of tears.’

“ ‘ You are right!’ said Manningfield, with fervent sincerity : ‘ it would, indeed, be the action of a demon ; but the wretchedness of Dorothea experiences no aggravation from the sympathy of the object of her attachment. Surely it must be as plain to you as to myself, that Wrottesley regards her with indifference, and is

either unconscious or careless of her preference?’

“ ‘Wrottesley!’ I exclaimed. ‘And is it possible that you, Manningfield, can fix your affection on a person convicted of a sacrilegious passion, of an attachment to the anointed priest of the altar?’

“ ‘You are either mad or dreaming, Randolph,’ he replied, with unfeigned amazement. ‘What are the frailties and errors of poor Dorothea to *me*, unless as the source of affliction to your sister’s friend? While I was yet doubtful of Florentia’s affection, the young princess kindly lent her ear to my doubts and anxieties, and hourly confirmed my attachment by details of Miss Maldyn’s virtues and excellences; and since I was blest with the certainty of her regard, I have naturally rewarded Dorothea’s previous compassion with an unfeigned tribute of pity towards the difficulties of her own position. As far as my own prejudices are concerned, I am not sufficiently bigoted to the exterior

observances of our creed, to regard with abhorrence the marriage of priests. I have resided too long in a Protestant country to make it a matter of reproach.'

" ' An oath once taken, although on erroneous grounds, is sacred for ever !' said I. ' Wrottesley is now beyond all power of dispensation from his vows—and should be above all indulgence in the common weaknesses of human nature.'

" ' We may look in vain for such perfection among the children of wrath,' said Manningfield; ' but on this occasion let me absolve him. Not even Dorothea Bagnagliori suspects him of the slightest susceptibility ; nay ! the exalted sanctity of his character is, in fact, the source of her adoration ; she loves him with the veneration of a votary, rather than with the weakness of a woman.'

" ' Heaven be thanked !' I exclaimed. ' There will be the less danger—the less sorrow for both ! But yourself, Manningfield—how comes it that I am only thus accidentally permitted to learn

your own views, your own attachments? Had you been more communicative you would have spared me many a heart-ache! It was the wish nearest my heart that you should conceive an affection for my sister.'

" ' Had you not so many anxious thoughts to occupy your attention,' replied my friend, ' I should pronounce your blindness inexcusable. Our hesitation in applying for your sanction of our engagement has arisen solely from the generous scruples of your sister, who is equally unwilling to insist on my abandonment of my profession for her sake, and to leave her brothers to the mournful isolation of their destiny. Florentia is persuaded that if permitted to share the monotony of Wrottesley's existence, you, my dear Maldyn, will imbibe his self-denying austerity; nor will she hear of quitting Europe, while you evince your present despondency.'

" ' And you are willing to disappoint the views of your family, and renounce the military ambition with which I have so often charged you, in

order to gratify her tenderness towards us?—This is indeed loving as I could wish Florentia Maldyn to be loved! But it must not be! If my brother persists in his determination of monastic seclusion, and recovers sufficiently to justify our removal, I shall willingly return with you to Bengal. Heaven knows I have little to detain me in my native country; and India or Apulia—what matters it where I waste away the remnant of my days?—With you, and Florentia, and your children, I shall experience a nearer approach to happiness than I could find elsewhere.

“ I accordingly undertook to ascertain the views of Wrottesley, and convey to him the intelligence of Florentia’s projected marriage with my friend; and although Princess Bagnaglori’s intended departure for Naples rendered the caution in some measure superfluous, I determined on profiting by the same occasion to warn him against the unacknowledged passion of Count Valvassone’s betrothed wife, and sound anew the depths of mystery in which his own destinies

were involved. I formed, in short, a resolution to utter those long repressed inquiries—‘ My brother, whom hast thou loved ?—My brother, how hast thou sinned ? ’ ”

CHAPTER XI.

O happy persecution, I embrace thee
With an unfettered soul ! So sweet a thing
Is it to sigh upon the rack of pain,
When each calamity bears groaning witness
To the pure martyr's faith.

MIDDLETON.

“ IT was after a night passed in harassing deliberations on the mode of framing these questions with the least possible offence to Wrottesley's feelings, that I rose one morning, and, on seeking him in his own apartments, found he had already made his way to the Franciscan monastery where the greater portion of his time was passed. On pretext of familiarizing himself with the religious exercises of the community, he had

obtained a cell from the favour of the superior ; a venerable man, to whom the peculiar sanctity and humility of the young acolyte rendered him an object of the highest interest.

“ To this hallowed retirement I determined to follow him ; and as I was slowly descending the terraces, leading by a succession of marble steps from the platform of the palace to the town below, pausing occasionally to admire the gorgeous brilliancy of the pomegranate blossoms, or the shapely outline of the bright green box trees which graced the marble vases ornamenting the balustrade, I perceived the advancing figure of Dorothea, ascending in the same direction leaning on the arm of her habitual attendant, an aged nurse who had watched over the infancy of all her family. The head of the young princess was enveloped in her black *faldetta* ; but she frequently paused in her ascent, as if panting for breath, and drew back the folds of sable silk from her face, as if to refresh herself by the cool morning air which beat in gusts along the level

terraces. On a nearer approach, I noticed that her hands were frequently and involuntarily clasped together; and as she advanced still closer, I could hear the voice of her companion addressing her in tremulous tones of counsel and comfort. But when she actually passed the spot where I stood, and hurriedly exchanged with me the compliments of the day, a rapid glance beneath her hood enabled me to discover that her cheeks were dim with even more than their wonted paleness, and her eyes discoloured by weeping.—How was this?—Were Manningfield's speculations erroneous?—Was the object of her visit to Bajabella, like my own, a private interview with Wrottesley? Was his retirement chosen as a cloak to this unhallowed purpose?

“Less tenderly disposed towards my brother's peculiarities than I had been in the commencement of my walk, I presented myself at the portal of the monastery; and, on the plea of urgent family business, requested access to Mr. Maldyn. I was accordingly conducted to the door of his

cell by a lay-monk of the order; and admittance having been demanded in the name of his reverence the superior, I suddenly found myself in the presence of the startled Wrottesley.—Alas ! what a spectacle greeted me on my entrance !—the form of my brother, lying extended on the floor in utter exhaustion, his bare shoulders lacerated and bleeding,—the discipline still grasped in his hand. ‘Leave us!’ I exclaimed to my conductor; and raising him in my arms, placed him on the wooden chair constituting the sole furniture of his cheerless apartment. I could perceive that his lips were wounded by the gnashing of his teeth in the extremity of bodily anguish !

“ ‘My dearest Wrottesley!’ cried I, irritated rather than touched by this excess of self-abasement and superstitious piety, ‘can you not be contented with bearing your faculties like a man, instead of indulging the spiritual pride which induces you to these extravagances of zeal? What have you done—what crime committed—that you deem the measure of punishment appointed by

the Almighty insufficient for your penance, and court these loathsome—these superfluous tortures?’

“ ‘He who wrestled with his agony in the garden of Gethsemane—’ my brother began.

“ ‘Blasphemer!’ I exclaimed, interrupting him with involuntary indignation. ‘Do you presume to emulate the patience and fortitude of your Redeemer?’

“ ‘Pardon me, brother! pardon me,’ was his meek reply. ‘That you thus exaggerate my fault and misconceive my motive is a blessing; or that, or any other form of contumely or injury, do I welcome with joy. Yea! trample upon me, my brother, and diminish my responsibility of sin and suffering.’

“ ‘Wrottesley!’ said I, ‘you terrify my very soul by this vehemence. Heaven grant that it be the fruit of a mistaken zeal, rather than of the promptings of an evil conscience! I would willingly believe that this prostration of spirit arises from the infirmity of health which is a

source of so much anxiety to us all; for well I know that the grasp of death upon the heart is capable of turning its best resolves to feebleness and mistrust. But shake off this morbid frame of mind;—rouse yourself, my dear Wrottesley, up, and be a man! You have duties to perform to your faith, your country, your family, yourself, such as may better work out your task of mortal bondage than acts of proud and solitary penance!’

“ With an air of mortification, but not of resentment, he now resumed his customary array, while I unfolded to him the projects of happiness entertained by Florentia and my friend, my anxiety to return with them to the east, and a chimerical notion that had glanced into my mind of inducing him to prosecute in the same direction the duties of his sacred calling. It was true that such a resolution would place him beyond reach of those ecclesiastical dignities which afforded my father’s original inducement in its selection; but the feud existing between the head of the house of Maldyn

and its younger branches had already deprived him of the support of family interest in their acquirement; and moreover, Wrottesley had disavowed, on many occasions, a view towards any honours at the disposal of the church of Rome.

“ ‘To India?’ he exclaimed, on my hazarding the first hint of such a scheme, ‘willingly—gladly!—Oh! that such a pilgrimage had been my fortune, instead of the destiny which conducted us to this luckless place; *one* thorn had at least been spared from my crown of martyrdom;’ and he wrung his hands in irrepressible anguish.

“ ‘Nay, then,’ said I, ‘it is as I feared, and Dorothea—’

“ ‘Is to me but as a suffering daughter of the faith!’ faltered Wrottesley Maldyn. ‘Pray for her, brother; give her your prayers and your pity, as I shall; for never till this day did I dream that our sojourn at Bajabella had been a source of—’ He paused, and averted his face; and at the same moment, remembering that the

brother who conducted me to his presence had stated him to be substituted for the day in the duties of one of the elder brethren then labouring under severe sickness, and that my brother had only quitted the confessional a short time previous to my visit, I had little doubt that in its sacred office Wrottesley had first obtained an insight into the lamentable weakness cherished in his favour by Princess Dorothea.

“But I knew that the seal of such a communication was sacred; and, without dwelling further on the subject, slightly observed, that for all our sakes it would be advisable to hasten our departure.

“‘So soon! so suddenly!’ was his involuntary exclamation. ‘I, too, who thought to lay down the weariness of life in this most favoured province of our holy church. But what matters on which section of the earth we inhale the breath of Heaven, and fulfil its behests?’

“‘We need remain in England,’ said I, ‘only

till the return of spring ensures the sailing of the eastern fleet ; and then—’

“ ‘England !’ said my brother, arresting the hasty steps with which he had been traversing the cell, and having paused beside me, fixing his large dark eyes intently on my face. ‘England ! I had not thought of that. Cannot the voyage be otherwise achieved ?’

“ And he listened with eager interest while I described to him the limited nature of the communication between Europe and Calcutta. At length it occurred to me that a passage might be procured for our family in a French merchant vessel from Havre ; unless it became necessary for the adjustment of Manningfield’s private affairs and the presentation of his bride to his family (one of considerable antiquity and respectability in the county of Derby) to visit London.

“ ‘London !’ again reiterated my brother. ‘Impossible ! If such be the course of our career, suffer *me* to remain in Italy.—London !—not all the wealth of the land to which we are bound, not

all the attractions of *this*, should induce me to set foot anew in that accursed city. Do not ask it, Randolph; do not ask it.'

"Surprised by the intensity of his emotion, I proposed that, without interfering with Manningfield's arrangements, we two should make our voyage together, and rejoin our friends in Bengal.

" 'They will be too happy,' said I, 'to need our society for some time to come.'

" 'True,' said he, 'for some time they *may* indeed be happy!—the stroke may be suspended over *their* heads; the bitter cup may even be long in the decoction of its poisonous ingredients. But it will fall at length;—the chalice must be quaffed at last;—and will not the dark hour derive a deeper gloom from these moments of antecedent brightness?'

" 'Such are the vicissitudes of every destiny,' said I.

" 'Such is the fixed and inalienable heritage of ours,' faltered my brother, again advancing

towards me, and grasping my arm. ‘So long as a Maldyn is born upon the earth, so long will the shadow overhang our race. A destiny is upon us. Accursed of Heaven, we are created but for the commission of crime, or the endurance of anguish!’

“ ‘Wrottesley!’ said I; ‘this very declaration is impious, or the result of madness.’ And firmly believing his reason to be disordered, I looked on him with unfeigned compassion.

“ ‘I am not mad,’ was his reply. ‘I often wish it were so; but I am not mad. No, Randolph, no!—the fables of antiquity were ever grounded on real foundations.—The tale of Atreus, brother, was no fiction. There have been,—there will ever be,—races of mankind elected by the will of the Creator for severest probation; some distinguished by the mightiness of their offences;—some by the magnitude of their atonement.—Brother, brother! so long as a Maldyn is left upon the earth, the commandments of

God will seem to court his infringement. The mark of Cain is upon our brows !’

“ Even while I entreated—nay ! commanded him to repress these presumptuous declarations, I own I shuddered beneath the terrible expression of anguish disfiguring the countenance of my brother. It was such as might have been attributed to Laocoön wrestling with the monsters appointed for his perdition. Vain had it been to reason with his infirmity ;—there was no remedy for such a state of mind except in the interposition of Heaven.

“ But Wrottesley was not the only member of the little circle of Bajabella who regarded the projected alliance of Manningfield and my sister with regret. The good old princess had conceived a real affection for her ; and flattered herself that on the marriage of Dorothea, Florentia might be induced to accept a permanent home under her roof. The unprotected situation of my sister, the improbability that she would be sought as a wife in a country where, as in that of

Naples, the nobility are restricted in their choice by early betrothment, seemed to render such a measure desirable to all parties; and Princess Bagnagiori almost recalled her former encomiums of the English colonel, when she found that his influence was about to deprive her of her inmates, at once and for ever. So strongly demonstrated indeed was her selfish discontent, that we judged it expedient to pursue our original intention of living out our term at Bajabella, instead of returning with the peevish old lady to Naples, according to her invitation. It was in vain she offered, as an irresistible allurement, the brilliant *fêtes* with which she intended to grace the return of her son and her daughter's bridegroom. Not one of our party experienced the slightest inclination to witness the sacrifice of the reluctant Dorothea.

“ At first, it had been my sister's desire that her own union might be solemnised by the hands of her brother, in the tranquil solitudes of Bajabella. But the informalities charged against my unfor-

fortunate marriage had rendered me tenacious on such points; and I persuaded Manningfield to insist that the ceremony should be performed at Naples, and witnessed and authenticated by a kinsman of his own, attached to the English mission. He even consented to precede us in our departure for that city, to complete the preparations for the solemnization; and it was settled that Wrottesley and myself should immediately afterwards embark for Genoa, while he proceeded with his wife, by a land journey, towards England.

“ These intentions, though kept a profound secret from the old lady our hostess, probably transpired to her daughter through Florentia’s means; for although Princess Dorothea avoided strictly and on all occasions the mention of Wrottesley’s name in her familiar intercourse with my sister, yet, as the time for a general separation drew nigh, her distress of mind became unconcealable and unconcealed. Florentia and herself had lived for more than a year in the un-

restrained confidence of womanly friendship ; and the habitual gentleness of Miss Maldyn's character was dignified into something of matronly superiority by an advantage of ten years of age over the young Neapolitan, which did but augment the tender veneration of her regard. But Florentia was incapable of sharing, and almost of comprehending, the bitter anguish with which this unexpected parting was contemplated by her friend. Her mild and rational tone of mind could not elevate itself to the exalted enthusiasm irradiating the soul of the Italian princess. *She* had been accustomed, from childhood, to vexations and separation from those she loved ; while Dorothea had lived till now a life of the most monotonous tranquillity. *She* was about to confide her destinies to the guardianship of an honourable man, the chosen of her heart ; while Dorothea was destined to waste the charms of her youth, the sweetness of her nature, on a boyish libertine, unqualified to appreciate the purity and nobleness of such a spirit.

“ ‘ And worse than all,’ said Manningfield (who,

from his familiar association with Florentia's friend, had better opportunities than myself of appreciating her attractions, and noting the condition of her mind)—‘worse than all, she is forced to compress within her aching bosom those rebellious feelings, which she knows to be repugnant to every principle and every obligation of those around her. I am persuaded Dorothea will never marry Valvassone, though evidently nerving her courage for some desperate measure. But she will never marry him!—never fulfil these odious and unnatural engagements. The girl's heart is breaking!—I wish we were off, and beyond the reach of participation in the catastrophe. Florentia has not a suspicion of the extent of the evil; and I would willingly spare her the sorrow of such a discovery.’

“I began to be of my friend's opinion, and to hope that nothing might occur to prolong our stay at Naples, when I directed my attention to the wasted form and marble countenance of Dorothea on occasion of our visit of adieu to

her mother. Princess Bagnaglori was on the point of departure, and amid all the bustle of such a moment; the going and coming of attendants; the parting charge to those who were to remain during the winter months at Bajabella; the struggling, and chiding, and squabbling which Italian gesticulation renders so vehement, she stood motionless, and as if unconscious of the tumult around her. Her fine features were fixed, her lips compressed as if in restraint of her emotions; but she did not utter a syllable.

“ ‘ Farewell! my dearest of friends,’ cried her mother to my sister. ‘ In the torrid climate wherein you rashly choose to seek a home, you will find no hearts so kindly disposed towards you as those you leave in Italy. Will she, Dorothea?—Speak, and tell these English friends of ours that they desert us cruelly, and will live to repent their decision. And Renzielina!—dearest child,—make haste and grow weary of Bajabella; make haste and discover how lonely the castle becomes after our departure;

make haste and visit Naples for the celebration of this ill-advised marriage of yours ; or you will never see my daughter again. Will she, Dorothea ? Speak, and tell your English friends that our dear Valvassone will soon arrive, and that you are to accompany him to Rome for the carnival.'

" But instead of replying to her mother, who indeed seldom needed a reply, or re-iterating her half-angry, half-courteous invitations, Dorothea stood motionless and pale as one of the statues which ornamented the gallery in which we were standing. Manningfield gave his arm to the princess to lead her to the carriage, and Florentia was compelled to walk by her side, listening to her frivolous complaints ; while Wrottesley, who would willingly have absented himself from this parting scene, having been summoned by order of the kind-hearted old lady, ensconced himself in the embrasure of the window, and affected to be intent on the movements of the suite in the court-yard below. He had already breathed a few words of formal farewell while touching with

his lips the withered hand of the princess; and nothing now remained but for me to offer my escort to the silent Dorothea, which was mechanically accepted.

“ She had already placed her hand in mine, and had even made a few steps towards the door to follow her mother; when, as if by an irresistible impulse, she turned suddenly towards my brother, and in a moment was kneeling at his feet. ‘ Your blessing !’ she faltered, in a hoarse concentrated voice, clasping her hands upon her bosom. ‘ Your blessing—your pardon!—for we shall meet no more. Pray for me; pray that the Mother of God may take pity on my tears, and end my probation.’

“ I know not what was Wrottesley’s reply to this invocation; for my eyes and heart were fixed upon the soft and melancholy beauty of the youthful figure before me, which was such as might have personified the Magdalen of a holier age and land. And as she knelt in humble prostration at the feet of the young and noble Wrot-

tesley, I almost forgot that it was sacrilege to upbraid the untowardness of fate which had placed an eternal barrier between persons so fitted for each other. In another minute she was gone; in another hour the tumult of the crowded court-yard had given place to the mournful tinkling of the fountain, whose monotonous music usually illustrated its desolation. But the spectacle of her despair—her beauty—her touching resignation—had impressed itself on my mind for ever.

“ ‘ Yea ! the curse of Cain is on our brows ! ’ cried my brother, when I found him some hours afterwards, pacing in solitary agitation the marble arcade of the quadrangle. ‘ We suffer, but we do not suffer alone ! We gaze on the young and beautiful, and they wither—we gaze on the fair and innocent, and they become tainted with the plague-spot of sin. My brother, my dear brother, said I not aright, that a destiny is over all our race ? ’ ”

CHAPTER XII.

Her faults were mine, her virtues were her own.—
I saw her, and destroyed her.

Witch.—With thy hand ?

Not with my hand—but heart—which broke *her* heart :
It gazed on mine, and wither'd !

MANFRED.

“ OF all the chimeras of mythological fiction,” observed Count Maldyn, on resuming his narrative, “ there is perhaps none more gloomy than that of which a modification had taken possession of the mind of Wrottesley. The idea of a race of human beings lying irremediably under the reprobation of the Deity, is fortunately negatived in modern times by every promise of the Gospel ; nay ! by the very spirit of the Christian

faith ; and our minds can scarcely frame a conception so inconsistent with reason and religion. Yet I could have wished that my brother had never given utterance to the delusion by which his spirit was oppressed ; for on reviewing at his suggestion the destinies of our house, I could not but acknowledge them to be tinged with an undue share of the darker shades of human calamity.

“ Sharing the dishonours heaped upon the Catholic population of the kingdom at the period of the accession of the House of Hanover, my grand-uncle, the Viscount Maldyn, took refuge in a cloister from the mortification of his worldly pride ;—his brother, my own grandfather, perished by his own hand, under circumstances of peculiar horror ; my father, after nourishing for years an antipathy of the strongest nature, had seen it derided and set at nought by his own children—by the first-born of his pride, and the favourite of his affections—and died in the struggle of his wounded feelings : while of

those two rebellious sons, the one was united with a woman to whom he was secretly an object of abhorrence;—the other, cankered to the very heart's core, was about to betake himself for ever to another hemisphere, in order to escape the consciousness of isolation haunting him in his own!

“ Was not this enough to justify the visionary denunciation of my brother, and to confirm our family as marked out by the wrath of the Divinity? Yet, no!—a darker destiny was yet undeveloped. Wrottesley, the sworn of God,—the priest of the altar! our propitiatory mediator with Heaven,—was not only given over to the remorse of some undefined and unspeakable crime, but had been the innocent means of introducing sin and sorrow into a bosom too fair and too pure to have been created as a temple for such infernal deities!—Dorothea Bagnaglori—the gentle Dorothea—who might have been predicted at her birth as utterly beyond the reach of so disastrous a destiny, had been sought out

in her foreign solitude to participate in the malediction attached to a race apparently incapable of collision with her own. Even the wilds of Ireland and the fertile gardens of Italy had been brought in contact to attest the fatality of our fortunes !

“ The opinions of my brother, therefore, however wild,—however obnoxious to rational argument,—were not destitute of a degree of confirmation from the coincidences of accident ; and I felt glad when Manningfield betook himself to Naples for the completion of his nuptial preparations, lest Wrottesley should disturb him by confidences of a similar nature, and perhaps introduce into the bridal garland of my sister a sprig of baleful and undying wormwood. I rejoiced, too, when Manningfield,—writing to us from the city to announce the day and the hour on which we should do well to time our arrival in order that the ceremony might be performed without delay,—mentioned that he had been kept aloof by his dread of the ill-humour of the venerable princess,

from all communication with the Bagnaglieri family ; and had fixed himself wholly in the diplomatic circles during his stay at Naples. According to his confirmation of our previous plans, the marriage was to be solemnized in the church of San Gennaro on the morning following our arrival, our own family and his English friends alone attending the ceremony ; and Manningfield had engaged us apartments in an hotel on the Chiaja, and a passage for Wrottesley and myself in an English schooner bound for Genoa.

It did not surprise me, Adrian, that the depression of my brother's spirits increased to a painful extent at the moment of quitting Bajabella. His austerities of life, the profound penitence which imparted to his youthful frame the debility of premature decay and stamped his boyish brow with the furrows of age, had obtained for him in the Franciscan community of the place the reputation of a saint, and from the venerable superior a degree of fatherly tenderness, to which the solemnity of their spi-

ritual intercommunication imparted an intensity beyond the common nature of filial and paternal love.

“ It grieves you to part from these good men,” said I, in a tone of sympathy, as I accompanied him home to the palace on the evening preceding our journey.

“ It grieves me more,” was his stern reply, “ to find that I have still some human predilections unsubdued within my heart. To a bosom scathed like mine by the angry bolt of Heaven, time and place should be indifferent ; nor can I account it otherwise than a token of sinful weakness, that Bajabella and its green woods—its glassy seas—its groves of myrtle and orange, cling to my imagination like a spell of beauty ; and that the weight now heavy on my mind apprizes me how often I shall sorrow after the soothing voice of yonder good old man, in the dreariness of my distant pilgrimage !”

“ Even Florentia, although standing on the threshold of a new life of happiness and love, was

moved to tears on quitting the beautiful region where its dawn had first irradiated her destiny ; and the rude, but grateful people, who assembled to pour their parting benedictions on the beneficent English stranger, the adopted friend of their liege lady. We left La Puglia with regret ; and arrived at Naples, harassed by all the annoyances of traversing a half-civilized country in an inclement season.

But the joy with which we were welcomed by my friend, and the eagerness with which he acknowledged how much was revealed to him of the strength of his affection for his dearest Florence, during the week he had been deprived of the sound of her voice, and the sight of her sweet and feminine beauty, roused me to more cheerful thoughts. It was indeed gladdening to perceive that *one* at least of our miserable race was likely to reverse the fiat of its destinies ; and that, in renouncing the name of Maldyn, my sister would attain prospects of domestic happiness, such as the confidence of mutual affection can alone

bestow. Even Wrottesley laid aside his ordinary reserve lest he should sadden the last evening our sister was to be wholly our own; and though Florentia took occasion to whisper to me that she should seek an interview with her lovely friend Princess Dorothea immediately after our embarkation; and though the mention of that name sufficed to cast a temporary shadow over our hearts, the hours passed away in cheering anticipations of our re-union in that gorgeous kingdom of the east, which, were it not a land of exile, would exhibit unnumbered attractions to the wanderers of northern climates.

Never did I see my sister assume a smile of such sweet, and holy, and innocent loveliness, as when, arrayed for the bridal ceremony, she greeted us on the morrow. My brother, misgiving his own self-possession at so interesting a moment, had persuaded her to accept some other ministry at the altar, and proposed to act as simple witness on the occasion; while to myself it was appointed to bestow her hand upon my

friend. But, aware of the gloomy delusion which had taken possession of Wrottesley's brain, it struck me that he was unwilling to tinge with the influence of his own evil fortunes, the union which afforded some promise of exemption to the daughter of our house.

It was one of those soft autumnal mornings which seem to breathe over the earth a farewell from the happier seasons of the year,—smiling upon its surface with the melancholy tenderness of departing beauty. My sister's attendants had procured, in honour of the occasion, a profusion of orange-blossoms and other flowers rare at that advanced season ; and as we traversed an extensive corridor thus bestrewn, on our way to the equipage waiting to convey us to San Genaro, the sunshine falling in sudden gleams upon Florentia's snowy draperies, as she passed the successive windows,—giving way as suddenly to the denseness of November gloom pervading the intervals,—afforded a preternatural exemplification of the varying destinies of her life. At one mo-

ment, she appeared an angel irradiated by a halo of glory; the next, she seemed to shrink, beneath the foldings of her veil, into obscurity and sadness; while Wrottesley, slowly following, showed in his sable garments and gloomy countenance like the evil genius of her fate!—It was in vain I strove to shake off this idle fancy; I could not, at that moment, regard my brother in the light of an ordinary human being!

It was not yet noonday, when, at the appointed hour, we reached the portal of San Gennaro; and on springing from the step of the carriage, I perceived an unusual stir and tumult, as if some important ceremony had been recently celebrated; but in a city of processions, such as Naples, nothing could less deserve surprise or comment. The multitude of filthy beggars and infirm or mutilated persons, ever found lounging on the steps of sacred edifices, seemed occupied by some especial object of discussion; but without troubling myself to listen to their ejaculations, I assisted Manningfield in the task

of conducting Florentia into the church, by drawing aside the heavy draperies suspended over the swing-door of entrance.

In a moment we saw that the various altars of the temple were illuminated and decorated, and the groined aisles still filled with the incense of some important rite. The archbishop, in his robes of state, followed by a numerous assemblage of priests, was retiring into the sacristy as we advanced; and I observed the chancel to be decorated with an array of gorgeous hangings, and draperies of silver and white. But it was for no bridal commemoration that these sumptuous preparations had been achieved;—emblems of mortality, and all the insignia of the grave, were displayed around.—The last echoes of a funeral anthem still reverberated from the choir.

“You should have forewarned us of this,” cried Manningfield to the sacristan who pointed out to us the chapel of Santa Maria delle Grazie, set apart for the celebration of the sacrament of

marriage; where our diplomatic countrymen and an English brother of the Dominican order were in waiting to receive us.

“Her Excellency died but yesterday,” was his reply, “and the body will remain here till to-morrow, when the grand ceremony of interment takes place. In this church where most of the high ceremonies connected with the court and nobility are solemnized, we have seldom a day without similar occurrences.”

At this moment we entered the aisle in which the catafalque was deposited; when two of the reverend canons approached us with the customary request that we would sprinkle holy water on the dead. Involuntarily my sister recoiled from such a ceremony at such a moment, and clinging to Colonel Manningfield’s arm, made way for Wrottesley and myself to advance and fulfil that sacred duty. But what was my amazement and horror when I perceived my brother, instead of governing his movements with the discretion due to the august temple of God, rush wildly and

irreverently along the aisle,—put aside the priests who were kneeling beside the body,—and after casting a hurried glance upon the bier, stagger towards the nearest column for support. All his presentiments were justified by that momentary view ! It was, indeed, Dorothea, whose sweet face lay there discoloured by the livid hues of death !

Attired, according to the custom of the country, in her brightest array, with a wreath of green myrtle encircling her head, she seemed as if entranced in sleep ;—but a sleep whose dreams were cheerless and painful. Instead of the placid smile which had adorned the wasted countenance of my own beloved Cecil when invested in the solemn garments of the grave—a smile which seemed destined to perpetuate in the depths of the sepulchre that happy consciousness of my presence which had cheered her dying moments,—the brows of the young and beautiful Dorothea were contracted as by her parting struggle ; and the jewels ornamenting her robes seemed placed there as if in mockery of the cold damp face on which they shed their

glaring reflections. Dorothea had evidently died in anguish ; nor had the bright soul which thus bequeathed the sad impression of its sorrow been able to preserve the fair frame it had so long inspired from the degradations of mortal nature !

But it was not the bier of the youthful victim—it was not the compression of her pale lips, nor the glassy glimmering of her half-closed eyes, which at that moment paralyzed my heart. My wretched brother having thrown himself writhing on the marble pavement of the church, now gave vent to the agony of his soul in shrieks whose piercing tones might have moved every heart to commiseration, had they not been instigated by the pangs of such unhallowed distress. He called upon Dorothea, as upon a soul in torture, to forgive him that he had been the blind instrument of her lawless love—the unconscious cause of her untimely death. He cried aloud to Heaven to withdraw its chastening hand—to mitigate its retribution upon his crimes—to spare the devoted victims of our house,—in terms so hideous, and

apparently so frantic, that it was well for his awful apostrophe to the Almighty was framed in a language unfamiliar to the wondering witnesses of the scene. Our Italian servants, who had followed to be spectators of the marriage rites, now rushed forward to my assistance, while I attempted to raise him in my arms, and convey him to the carriage. The completion of the ceremony of the day was wholly out of the question. Florentia, half fainting, had already been removed from the scene by the horror-struck Manningfield; and many of the superstitious idlers who are to be found at all hours in continental churches, appalled each other with exclamations that the English stranger was possessed by the devil. In the age of miracles, such a denunciation might indeed have borne some semblance of truth. The unhappy Wrottesley was rolling to and fro on the ground;—his eyes closed;—his lips covered with foam;—his body distorted by spasmodic contractions;—and offering a horrid contrast to the gentle form stretched upon the adjoining bier—all coldness, and stillness, and rest.

Yet profound, my dear Adrian, as was my emotion at this afflicting scene, while I assisted in his removal from the vulgar inquisition of the crowd and the murmurs of inquiry which were now beginning to arise respecting the origin of this strange exhibition, I had a far more trying ordeal in reserve. I had to endure, in the presence of Manningfield, the maniacal execrations poured aloud by my brother on his own head, and on that of some mysterious partner in crime. He spoke of our family as a predestined race ;—he spoke of himself as shut out from the mercy of Heaven. In his paroxysms he cried aloud for the forgiveness of his brother Randolph,—that at the instigation of a human fiend he had abetted in the concealment of his child—the vilification of his marriage !

“ I knew it,” he cried, as he lay bound on his frenzied couch. “ I discovered it ;—I sought out the priest they had bribed to silence, the witnesses they had suborned, the nurse who bore away the boy, the menials who watched over his in-

fancy. And did I uphold my brother's cause, or stand forth in behalf of the wretched wife whom they had terrified from the fulfilment of her duties,—estranged from her wedded husband,—and condemned to seclusion and madness?—Did I brave the haughty Templetons in the pride of their triumph, and smite them to the dust by the infamy of public exposure?—No, no, no!—I crept to the ear of Katharine,—the woman I loved,—of my brother's affianced wife, of that incarnation of evil;—I crept to *her* ear, and whispered my hideous tale, and threatened, and closed my heart against her entreaties; and dearly did she buy the preservation of her secret.—Like me, she forfeited all—her mortal peace, her immortal soul!—Katharine Darley's burning eyeballs glared hatred upon me as I swore to conceal the boy's survival from the knowledge of its father; but they glared not as mine do now; nor did her brain rage in the bewilderment of remorse as mine will for ever and ever! She loathed me—my brother's bride loathed me, even as I loved

her, with an intensity beyond the instigation of any mortal passion. We were victims,—victims to the fatality spread around the house of Maldyn,—victims to the ascendancy of the powers of evil—victims—victims—as I am—as *she* was who is lying among reptiles in the vaults of San Gennaro !”

Such, my son, were the horrible revelations by which I purchased my first consciousness of your existence ; and even at that frightful moment, even amid the terrors that ensued—the prolonged agonies—the tremendous death-bed of my erring but repentant brother, the feeling uppermost in my heart was exultation in the certainty of possessing a living pledge of Cecil’s affection,—a breathing thing that bore affinity with my injured wife !—In the course of those weeks of humiliation and dismay that Wrottesley lingered on the verge of the grave, intervals of self-possession enabled me to extort from him an acknowledgment of the means by which he had first possessed himself of evidence of the authenticity of my

marriage, and the preservation of my child ; and with the assistance of Manningfield, the necessary depositions were taken without extending the dishonour of the family. But ardently as I desired to obtain the co-operation of the dying man in legitimatizing my unknown son, I own it was a relief to my feelings when the physicians summoned to his aid pronounced that the powers of life were giving way, and that the frail body of the sufferer could not long survive this total disorganization of mind. I felt that my brother was no longer capable of earthly happiness,—of earthly pardon ; although that penetrating eye which had marked his penitence and noted his expiation might vouchsafe to him the still mightier mercies of redemption—the peace which passeth all understanding. As I closed his dying eyes, and saw his head laid in the grave, I felt that gracious was the will of Heaven which decreed his release. Of what he had been to *me*, I thought no more. I forgave his treachery to the brother who had loved him so much and

been the hand in hand companion of his youth; for I remembered with awe and trembling, that his sins towards himself and his Creator were now weighed in the balance, and judged on the judgment-seat of the Most High !”

CHAPTER XIII.

Mir. You have often
Begun to tell me what I am : but stopped
And left me to a bootless inquisition,
Concluding, " Stay ! not yet ! "

Pros. The hour's now come !
The very minute bids thee ope thine ear ;
Obey and be attentive. Dost remember
A time before we came unto this cell ?

THE TEMPEST.

- AND thus had one of the fairest pages of our family archives become blotted with shame, and the bridal day of my sister obscured by the darkest of storms. From the moment of Manningfield's avowal of affection for Florentia, I had made it my study to intercept all private com-

munication between himself and Wrottesley, lest the gloomy chimeras of my brother should insensibly produce an unfavourable influence on the mind of one about to become a member of our family. But there was no possibility of concealing the recent catastrophe, nor the enormities it had tended to bring to light. Manningfield would not hear of leaving me to become the solitary guardian of my brother's pillow; and not one word had escaped him of all the horrible revelations of the delinquent's delirious ravings.

But it was not from him proceeded the determination which blighted for ever my hopes of finding a brother in my friend. His anxiety to remove his beloved Florentia to a happier home and brighter destiny was only augmented by the information he had recently acquired; and it was solely my sister's courage and firmness of purpose which now decreed their separation. Though endowed by nature with a disposition as cheerful as it was gentle, her spirit had been gradually depressed by a series of domestic sor-

rows and personal mortifications ; till grown fatally sensitive to the instability of worldly joy, she was now intent only on preparations for her own great trial. I had succeeded, it is true, in withholding from her participation the darker afflictions connected with my brother's destiny ; but previous to my arrival he had not failed to unfold to his sympathizing companion those peculiar notions touching the house of Maldyn, which had recently received such horrible authentication. Whether in the course of Wrottesley's illness she perceived, or fancied she perceived, involuntary symptoms of uneasiness and reluctance on the part of her affianced lover, it is impossible to determine ; but on the evening succeeding our brother's release, Florentia secretly quitted her home, nor did I see her again till she had placed an eternal barrier between herself and Manningfield by assuming the garb of a Carmelite. From behind the chilling grate of a cloister, she breathed her last farewell to me, previous to my departure for England in search of my child ; nor could I

wonder that she had taught herself to regard as unsanctioned of Heaven, a marriage interrupted by so dreadful a catastrophe.

“ I love him too well, far—far too well,” faltered Florentia, when I reproached her with the wretchedness she was heaping on my friend, “ to involve him in the fatalities of our house. Watch over him, dearest Randolph—comfort him, soothe him ; and may the devotion of *my* life to penitence and prayer suffice to propitiate the future vengeance of Heaven. May that jealous God, who visits the sins of the fathers upon their children, be moved to absolve the crimes of the undenounced offender of our race ; and in your person, my dear brother, and that of your child, may the sentence be accomplished.”

I had little difficulty in persuading my unfortunate friend to quit a city connected with such varied scenes of affliction, and incessantly affording a renewal of his regrets. But such was the despondency of his mind, that I dared not indulge in *his* presence those joyous anticipations

which had arisen like a day-spring amid the darkness of the recent tempest. While heavy sighs were still bursting from the depths of his heart, how could I insult him with an avowal of the delicious pulsation that throbbed in mine whenever I recalled to memory the fair and gentle child I had seen clasped to the bosom of the detestable Lady Abbotscourt, and strove to trace in its remembered features some token of Cecil's loveliness—of Cecil's love. Already I seemed to feel the touch of its little hand,—the warmth of its breath,—the endearing glance of its smile,—its soft caresses of childish tenderness ;—already I seemed to listen to the name of ' father,' lisped in the enrapturing accents of infantine love. For four long years had I been defrauded of this treasury of happiness, and shut out from the holiest sympathies of human nature ! Could such an injury be forgiven ?

Never shall I forget the excitement which fevered my frame during the interval between my brother's death and my arrival at Dover !

My existence was an alternation of rapture and agony ; at one moment exulting in the anticipation of clasping my son within my arms,—and the next, recalling to mind the often-repeated disappointments which had prepared their penalties for my too sanguine heart. If my restlessness was for a moment tranquillized by sleep, some hideous dream would startle me into new terrors ; some terrible picture of the casualties of human life—of human *childhood*—would glare before my eyes in visionary mockery ;—till time and space seemed leagued against me to prolong these tormenting uncertainties. Contrarieties of every description beset our journey ; and on my actual arrival in England, my mind was so overwrought by its previous excess of anxiety, that I kneeled down and kissed the land in an agony of delirious joy !

On approaching the metropolis, a new sense of happiness seemed dawning within me ; and it was with difficulty I calmed down my impatience to the demeanour of a rational being, when I dis-

covered that my brother and his family were on a tour, and that their *protégé*, little Adrian, who passed for the son of one of Lord Templeton's tenants, had been placed at some obscure school. It was fortunate for me that Manningfield was at hand, to direct and assist me in the negotiations which now became indispensable to obtain a clue to your retreat.

Willing to spare the mind of my brother, as well as the honour of our house, the disclosure of many circumstances which Wrottesley's infirmity of reason had brought to light, my first step was to address a letter to Lady Abbotscourt, setting forth my proofs of her guilt, and demanding the immediate restitution of my son. But Katharine was now grown bold in sin, and on this occasion demonstrated that

A shameless woman is the worst of men ;

by replying to my claims with a declaration that they were grounded only on the ravings of a dying lunatic.

It was solely by a legal procedure, therefore, that I was enabled to repossess myself of the offspring of my beloved Cecil ; and this termination of the business was every way unfortunate. Lord Templeton, who had been kept in partial ignorance of the detestable plots of his wife and daughter, became acquainted with the existence of his grandson only to recognise in him an illegitimate outcast of his race, and expired ere I had means to prove that the malicious intrigues of Lady Abbotscourt had originated the doubts thrown upon the validity of our marriage. The certificate in Cecil's possession had probably been destroyed during her illness ; and the officiating priest, originally bribed to silence, was now no more. Even Father John, his companion in the religious fraternity to which he belonged, by whose interposition this singular tissue of enormities first became known to my miserable brother, had ceased to exist ; and I found that the noble and promising boy I was at length permitted to strain in fatherly fondness to my bosom, was excluded by

the malice of his nearest relatives from all hereditary claims on the families of Darley or Maldyn.

“And yet,” cried Adrian, incapable of restraining any longer the anxious perturbation of his feelings—“and yet, my dearest father, you addressed me yesterday as heir to the title of Abbotscourt?”

“Be patient,” replied the count, smiling at his vehemence; and it was the first smile which had brightened his careworn countenance in the course of his narration. “Believe me it required all your father’s patience to endure the persecutions of which I found you the object. My funds exhausted by the expensive legal process to which I had been compelled to have recourse,—my health broken by the series of agonizing trials to which I had been exposed,—my pride wounded by the insulting triumph of the infamous Katharine, I had little left but my honour and my sword to ensure a maintenance for my injured child. But even these were of some account in the disordered

state of European politics. I had brethren in arms, of my own persuasion, serving with distinction in the armies of the emperor. I furnished myself with the necessary recommendations, entered the Austrian cavalry, served in it with favour and distinction, and retired to the seclusion of Elzstein only when my infirmities necessitated my seclusion from active service. During the troubles of the French invasion my son was sheltered at Elzenkrentz, under the tutorage of the worthy Remigius ; and the friendship which ensued between us determined me to become the proprietor of this humble retreat ; where I trusted to end my days unmolested by the cares of the world, and soothed in my decline by the succours of the church. Had I pursued my military career in its original destination, I might indeed have attained similar distinctions, and achieved a more ample provision for my son. But India, my dear Adrian, is fatal to the frame of youth ; and to expose my only child to the perils of such a climate, or to endure a second separation from my re-

covered treasure, was not to be thought of: I had therefore suffered Manningfield to depart alone."

"And was Lord Abbotscourt satisfied to leave his only brother to the obscurity of such a fate?"

"Alas! my dear Adrian, I have every reason to believe that, to the last, the ruling passion of my brother's existence was hatred to me and mine. I had forestalled him in the favour of his father, the regard of his family, the affections of his wife; and not even the sacrifices and penalties to which he had seen me condemned were sufficient for the mitigation of his fury. Perhaps there might be traced, in the intemperance of his feelings, some symptoms of aberration of intellect; for only a few years after my final abandonment of my native country, he withdrew himself wholly from society, and from his family. While Lady Abbotscourt pursued, amid the dissipations of London, that heartless career which was best fitted for the indulgence of her evil passions, her lord was a solitary inhabitant of the obscure castle, to the desolation of which his

own efforts had so materially contributed. Rejecting the society of his only daughter, who, whatever might be her mother's faults, was guiltless of offence towards him, he lived a recluse, and died—a *maniac*!”

“And this daughter—this cousin—does she yet live?” said Adrian. “Or am I now sole representative of the ill-fated house of Maldyn?”

“It is scarcely three years,” replied the count, “since I received a letter from Mr. Butler, the confidential agent of my brother, acquainting me that in consequence of his mental infirmity commissioners had been appointed by the Irish Chancery, for the regulation of his affairs. That my absence from the kingdom had prevented the insertion of my name in the commission; but that, as heir apparent to the title and estates, my presence was earnestly desired on the spot. He added, in the name of Lady Abbotscourt, certain mysterious allusions to her desire of extinguishing the feuds of the family by an alliance between her daughter, sole

heiress to the immense opulence of the Darleys, and my son, Adrian Maldyn; and the expressions of almost maternal tenderness towards yourself in which this proposal was couched, were intermingled with hints of the possibility of establishing your rights and legitimacy."

"An alliance between *my* mother's son, and the daughter of Lady Abbotscourt!" cried Adrian. "How, my dear father—how could you find terms sufficiently contemptuous to mark your refusal?"

"Rendered wary by former experience," replied the count, "my reply was any thing but adverse or scornful. I entreated further explanations,—alleged the state of my health as the cause of my disinclination to visit England,—and requested from Mr. Butler some insight into the character and disposition of my niece. Lady Abbotscourt, I knew, was sufficiently acquainted with mine, to be assured that the mere temptation of thirty thousand per annum would be insufficient to decide me on accepting her for a daugh-

ter-in-law ; and the result proved that I had not reckoned with an erroneous calculation. Satisfied, by the earnestness of my inquiries respecting her daughter, that I was eager to enrich the future coronet of Abbotscourt, by securing the heiress for my son, Katharine now ventured to negotiate in her own name. The reply was indited by her own hateful hand ; and expressed in strong terms her joy and gratitude that the animosities of our earlier years were likely to be appeased, and that an union between the surviving representatives of the family would extinguish all remembrance of past misfortunes. Her daughter, whom she represented as a model of every grace and every excellence, had exhibited from her birth, she said, a peculiar family resemblance, which would probably tend to endear her as much to myself, as in her early childhood it had done to Lord Templeton, who had bequeathed her the reversion of his splendid fortune and princely estates.

“ It was always my hope and project,” wrote

the crafty Lady Abbotscourt, “in that detention of your son, which you so ungenerously resented, to educate my nephew in a manner deserving the name he doubly inherits, with the view of uniting him to the last of the Darleys. Confirmed in this intention by the enthusiastic tenderness I soon conceived for the child, I found it difficult to relinquish him to your hands; and not even my own lovely girl has ever obtained so strong a hold upon my affections, as the Adrian Maldyn whom I had already taught myself to regard as my own.”

To these flattering declarations, she incautiously added a declaration that her sister’s marriage certificate was unquestionably in existence; and in the next letter I had the art to extort from her in the process of negotiation, she actually committed herself by so detailed a confession of facts, that I had no longer any hesitation in throwing off the mask and placing her letters in the hands of the commissioners appointed to the management of the Maldyn estates. The vali-

dity of my marriage was instantly investigated and confirmed; for my threat of exposure proved a sufficient inducement to Katharine to give up the original documents she had so long secreted."

"And her daughter," inquired Adrian, with an air of affected unconcern, "did she not resent this tacit rejection?"

"Of the feelings or opinions of either," replied the count, "I inquired no further. To *me* both were worse than indifferent; but I doubt not that the charms imputed to Miss Maldyn, combined with the attractions of her enormous wealth, have long since secured her a suitable alliance. She must be three years younger than yourself, and consequently in her twenty-first year. I trust that the melancholy warning of her father's mental affliction may have operated favourably on her mind. Heaven knows, the offspring and pupil of Katharine Darley must have had need of such a lesson!"

"But since my uncle's demise has deter-

mined you to renew your intercourse with your native country," said Adrian, after a meditative pause, "surely, my dear father, you will be persuaded to accompany me to England? I can no longer wonder at the aversion which estranged you from your native country, while poverty and the imputed illegitimacy of your child tended to degrade you from your rightful position; but now—now that your claims and mine are established—now that all the joys of gratified pride and gratifying opulence are at your command—why should you restrict your existence to this obscure and cheerless retreat;—why condemn yourself to the desolate monotony of an Austrian village?"

"I will not chill your enthusiasm by an old adage, and tell you that 'custom is second nature;' or attempt to explain to a person in full enjoyment of the buoyant impulses of youth and health, how limited are the pleasures, how indolent the habits of the sick and infirm. I will

rather, my dear son, leave you to suppose," said the count, smiling at his eagerness, "that I am willing to put you to the proof by the united temptations of liberty, wealth, and personal distinction."

"I trust I shall not dishonour myself in the ordeal," cried Adrian, blushing deeply as he spoke. "But I own it would be gratifying to me to receive the benefit of my father's experience in my first intercourse with England and Englishmen."

"And *Englishwomen*!" added the count; "for I trust to receive a daughter-in-law from your hands of your own faith and country. Yes! my dear son; you must marry and settle at Abbotscourt. Invite me to England or Ireland by new ties and renovated connexions, and I shall less intensely dread the recollections of early ties and youthful associations which would at present greet me at every step. Invite me to the cheerful circle of a domestic fireside, and I promise

to renounce Elzstein, and quarter myself with old Armbrust for the remainder of my days, in a wing of Abbotscourt Castle."

CHAPTER XIV.

I am resolved I will not stop his journey,
Nor practise any violent means to stay
The unbridled course of youth in him—for that
Restrained becomes impatient.
He that's compelled to goodness may be good, !
But for that fit alone ; while others, drawn
By softness and example, get a habit.

BEN JONSON.

It was only a few days after this touching but gratifying explanation, that Adrian Maldyn took his departure from the desolate manor-house, of which he allowed himself to speak in such disparaging terms ; and sooth to say, his exit was noted in the village with almost the same exultation that had celebrated his entrance.

Count Maldyn—or let us defy the power of habit, and call him at once by his own name and title, Lord Abbotscourt—had acquired, in the course of his long seclusion, notions and peculiarities which might be termed eccentric, even had they not been occasionally tinged by that flightiness of mind characteristic of the organization of the Maldyn family. It was his pleasure to alter nothing of his previous course of life, in honour of his change of fortunes. “I have been happy and contented during the last eight years,” said he to his son, “with the attendance of Hiob Armbrust, and three or four boorish house-knaves, and pottering old women; and why increase my establishment?—They serve me for love no less than lucre; and I should only breed strife and contention among them by the introduction of a gang of idle menials, such as your Ebène, and the laced varlet whom you call your courier. Even were I at your suggestion to pass the winter at Vienna, who should I find among my old comrades so

patient towards my long stories as the reverend superior of St. Florian's—so dexterous in the management of my gout as the worthy Brother Remigius?—No ! no ! Adrian ; I am grown narrative and infirm in my mental and bodily capacities ; and here, in my old home, I am sure of indulgence. Farewell, boy ! farewell !—be merry—be wise ; and if you are willing to gratify the whims of your father, devote a vacant half-hour of every day to the transcription of its events. In sailing on the summer-sea of youth, we know not on what barren strand we may be wrecked hereafter ; and believe me there comes a time when the reviewal of past events forms one of our truest gratifications. Had I exerted myself to chronicle the passing events of my earlier life, the record would have served to cheer many a tedious day of subsequent solitude and sickness.”

To so slight a request Mr. Maldyn had nothing to offer but cheerful acquiescence, while the boundless liberality practised towards him by his father in every arrangement for his journey and

residence in England demanded his utmost gratitude.

“Judging from the correspondence of Mr. Meriton, the legal agent to whom I am indebted for those negotiations with Lady Abbotscourt which terminated in the establishment of your rights, I have little doubt you will find in him a judicious adviser and gentlemanly man. In both capacities I have already bespoken his friendship for my son,” continued Lord Abbotscourt; “and as he is installed in Butler’s appointment for the universal regulation of my affairs, you will have no difficulty in obtaining from him any further intelligence you may require. From my old and excellent friend, Sir Herbert Manningfield, you will derive excellent counsel on matters more closely connected with your intercourse with society. Even changed as you are from the wild boy of fourteen who accompanied him in his ramble through Styria and Carniola, immediately after the peace, I have little fear but that he will recog-

nise the nephew of that beloved Florentia who survived but so short a time their disastrous separation. Little, indeed, did I dream when Manningfield scouted my retreat on the Traun, that we should both live to acquire possessions of so much more dignified a character; *he*, the modern elegance of Manningfield Park,—and myself the ponderous antiquity of our baronial castle.”

“ Still less did I imagine,” observed Adrian, with a smile, “ that the general, whose quaint habits and Orientalisms were the sport of my boyish satire, had been the hero of a romantic incident. I trust his ancient friendship for my father has long induced him to forget in me the youthful petulance he was wont to reprehend.”

“ If half the merits he ascribes to Lady Harriet Manningfield—”

“ How !—is Sir Herbert really married ?” cried Adrian. “ I remember you wrote to me at Göttingen of some such scheme.”

“ Married—and to a young and charming

woman," replied his father. "From *their* introductions you will probably derive a favourable access to London society."

"I should rather imagine that the rank and fortune I derive from yourself, my dear father, will afford a surer passport."

"My dear Adrian," replied Lord Abbotscourt, gravely, "draw no deductions of England and its prejudices from the contracted sphere of a petty German court. Your native country is mighty in every thing, even in its faults; and at present you can form little conception of the arbitrary nature and prodigious extent of the conventional formalities prevalent in the metropolis you are about to visit. In modern London—(if I am to believe Sir Herbert's representations)—in modern London, as in the Paris of the last century, an error of taste ranks in the scale of delinquency far blacker than a breach of morality. To be ridiculous, is to be infamous; Fashion has assumed the perpetual dictation of society."

"General Manningfield is so much of a hu-

morist, that we must allow for some exaggeration in the picture."

"For *much*,—or I should scarcely venture to recommend a visit to the heartless and fastidious circles depicted in his sketches. Still, let me forewarn you to beware of attracting too much attention to yourself on your entrance into society. Our family has outlived the notice of the public; the name of Maldyn, for so many years unpronounced among our countrymen, is almost forgotten; and in the formation of new friendships and connexions, I advise you to abstain from any ostensible pretension to the opulence and honours with which it is connected. Do not render yourself a mark for the intrigues of the designing of either sex."

Such was the parting advice of the doating parent; and if Adrian already in some degree premeditated its infringement, something must be pardoned to the buoyant spirits of twenty-three, excited to their highest pitch by the first prospect of independence. During the few remaining days

of his sojourn at Elzbach, he had some difficulty in restraining his impatience under the endurance of the St. Florianic homilies, the importunate reprehensions of old Armbrust, and the vehement apostrophes of Michelehen, and divers other ancient matrons of the village. It was astonishing the quantity of mischief, both moral and active, which Monsieur Ebène the French valet, and Ludwig the Hanoverian courier, had managed to perpetrate during the ten days of idleness inflicted upon their lively capacities at Elzbach. If half the reports officially rendered to their young master were correct, neither the village, the monastery, nor the castle — neither church nor state — had been exempted from their waggery and knavery ; and a general exclamation of joy and triumph actually greeted the departing wheels of their patron's son. Not Adrian himself was more delighted to get rid of the tedious, prosing, matter-of-fact worthies of the *Gold Forelle*, than were the Elzbacheners themselves to be secured from the domestic incursions of Ludwig and his dandified comate.

Yet the reflections of Mr. Maldyn, as he rapidly skimmed the level plains of Bavaria on his way towards Strasburg, were tinctured with regrets wholly independent of his parting with his home, or the melancholy narrative recently unfolded to his knowledge. He could not forget that while his father had thus gratuitously laid bare for his edification every secret, every sorrow of his past life, *he* had retained within his own bosom confessions of folly and disobedience such as it was his duty to tender in return. While journeying from Hanover homewards, Adrian had firmly made up his mind to acknowledge and claim his father's indulgence for transgressions hitherto unsuspected at Elzbach; and now that the moment for familiar intercourse was over, he bitterly reproached himself for having day after day neglected the suggestions of his own frank and honourable nature. He felt how much easier would have been the personal confession of his youthful excesses, than the task of committing them to an indelible impression. He felt the

awkwardness of writing “My dear father, I have deceived you. While you supposed me busy in the pursuit of my studies at Göttingen last winter, I was passing the carnival at Paris with my friend Gustavus Adelberg in the midst of dissipation and riot. I have formed friendships and connexions of which you dream not. I have mingled familiarly among those English fashionables you describe in such severe terms. Already I am loved and hated—already I have been caressed, cajoled, defrauded,—by those against whose iniquities you forewarn me. Instead of requiring the favour of Sir Herbert and Lady Harriet Manningfield to ensure my admittance into the great world of London, my own sanction may not be useless to themselves. And although it was ostensibly Adrian “Baron von Elzstein” who accompanied Gustavus von Adelberg in this unauthorized expedition, I have little doubt of finding Adrian Maldyn recognized with pleasure by many of those fair countrywomen who vouchsafed their smiles to the German truant. Such, my dear

father, such were the indiscretions which occupied the leisure of your absent son; and such the modes of excess to which I have recently applied the first-fruits of your liberality!"

Even now he resolved to defer his letter of contrition till his arrival in London; flattering himself that he might be enabled to enliven its vexatious details with intelligence of a more cheering order.

In the mean time, it was a circumstance by no means unacceptable to Mr. Maldyn that his route to England necessitated a short pause amid the scenes of his stolen pleasures. He had promised his father that a week should form the utmost limit of his stay in Paris; but Lord Abbotscourt, in suggesting a period too short for the formation of dangerous attachments, had very little suspicion that he was authorising a visit intended only for their *renewal*; that his university novice had figured as the young and handsome Baron Elzstein, at half the *bals costumés* of the preceding carnival; that he was

the idol of the *foyar* at the *Gymnase*, and the victim of the *cercle* at the *salon*; that not Monsieur Ebène himself was more warmly welcomed at the Hotel de Wagram, than the young stranger who had occupied an humble *quatrième* in the month of March, and who now returned *en grand Seigneur*, in the month of December, to take possession of its brilliant suite *au premier étage*.

Anxious as was Mr. Maldyn to set foot upon his native country, and acquaint himself with those interests and localities and customs which had been so often the theme of his conversations with his father, there was something in the exhilarating aspect of Paris which insensibly moderated his impatience. He knew that London, whether in its general or individual character, had nothing to offer comparable with the graceful sociability of the select circles of the *Chaussée D'Antin*, or the piquant variety of the public amusements of the French capital; and it was not till he had ascertained at the hotel of the

British embassy, that his friends, Lady Neville and Mrs. Perceval, had quitted Paris to pass the winter in Italy, and that Sir Henry Bagot, the young *attaché* whose intimacy with the son of Baron Adelberg had been his means of general introduction during their former visit, was now in England on leave of absence,—that he could reconcile himself to the thought of so speedy a departure from the scene of all his pleasures. He had already despatched from Munich an invitation to his friend Gustavus, to meet him in England, and accept in London some slight token of his gratitude for the hospitality and friendship lavished upon him during the five years of his residence in Hanover; and as soon as Ludwig could be persuaded to admit that the Offenbach calash had undergone sufficient reparation to encounter the perils of the *pavé* of Picardy, and the macadamization of Kent, they quitted the joyous, stirring, sunshiny, obsequious, laughing, dancing, singing city of vaudevilles,—slept their way from the porte St. Denis to

Dessin's Hotel, and from the Ship Inn to Westminster Bridge.

Few individuals have ever sat down to their introductory cutlet in the *appartement des princes* of M*****'s hotel so indifferent to the merits of the *chef* and the state of their own appetite, or so keenly alive to the novelties of the scene, as Lord Abbotscourt's son. Every object, every sound, the very air he breathed, was a source of interest and curiosity to his mind. Every trifle connected with his native country had been at one time or other an object of inquiry to him; and though he was scrupulously careful to assume the air of languid listlessness he had been taught to admire in Count Anastasio Pignatelli, Sir Henry Bagot, and others of the elect of English *ton*, his eyes and ears and heart were open to a thousand new impressions and anticipations. The pungency of the sooty winter atmosphere,—the growl of “Second edition of the evening *Courier*,” shouted and echoed from Bond-street to Grosvenor-

square ; the rumble of the occasional carriages, and the jingling of the frequent hackney-coaches over the hollow pavement—even the ordinary furniture of the chamber in the clumsiness of its English solidity—struck him with all the force of novelty. Never had an *iski* or an *ouski* a Venetian magnifico or a Persian satrap, perambulated that chamber of heterogeneous inmates, with a more eager inquisition into its peculiarities, or a more earnest desire for the dawning of day, to extend his observations to the nationalities and Nash-onalities of modern London.

CHAPTER XV.

J'écrirai avec sincérité, mais suivant mon humeur et ma fantaisie. Quelquefois m'abandonnant à ma paresse, à mon insouciance, et courant ensuite après des souvenirs presque effacés; d'autrefois plus ému, recherchant avec soin tous mes sentimens, les écrivant chaque jour, et osant même devancer l'avenir.—DE SOUZA.

DIARY OF THE HON. ADRIAN MALDYN.

—'s Hotel, Brook-street.

December 23, 182.—Arrived in London;—the heart's core of the civilized earth!—Wearied to death by the contrariety of *postillons* and post-boys,—*commissionnaires* and custom-house officers, and all the Wrights and wrongs of my Dover journey,—but stimulated to new life by

wonder and curiosity. To-morrow I shall commence my chronicle; and never was night so importunate as that which still divides me from a morrow so full of excitement. Why did the destinies decree my arrival here at this season of short days and tedious nights?

January 4.—My father is right!—There cannot be a stronger check upon the conduct than the custom of diarizing our follies and fancies. The man who commits his opinions to paper warm from the mint of the brain (or of the heart, so long as impulse and not judgment rules the hour) is startled on finding their inconsistencies forced on his notice, and learns to mistrust himself on future occasions. It has been said that no two persons differ so widely from each other, as the same individual from himself at successive periods of life. Even my short experience confirms this notion; and I am resolved to ascertain its truth by perfect candour in my self-communing. In spite of all that has been predicted to me of the influence of the

great world, at least let me be honest with *myself*, and reserve my lies for my friends.

Oh, this London!—I had intended to sit down pen in hand the very day succeeding my arrival, to record my impressions of England,—if England that portion of the kingdom can be called, which is daily and nightly traversed by restless peregrinators between Britain and the wide continent. Impressions!—what *did* I feel?—what *did* I think?—I know not!—Every hour from that to this has imprinted some new and striking image on my mind; yet I have never found a moment to give them permanent existence. In Paris, indeed, every minute is occupied, and pressingly occupied; but there is something so easy, so accommodating, so *glissant* in all its engagements, whether voluntary or peremptory, that no bustle ensues. Life is made a sport instead of a toil even in its severer duties; and the ball is kept up without effort or weariness. In London there is more

pleasure; the sources of amusement are wider and more various; but one works harder in finding them. For my own part, I prefer the garden rose to those which must be laboriously forced into existence.

We used to say at Göttingen that every Englishman is born with a mania for legislation. Let him have but a single idea in his head, and it is sure to be connected in some way or other with "the British constitution." The hereditary worshippers of liberty are in point of fact so enamoured of despotism, that not content with the laws of God and man framed for their subjugation, they have constituted half a dozen minor codes of the most fanciful and arbitrary nature; and as if these enactments of the common council of society were insufficient to render him uncomfortable, each individual institutes for himself an extraordinary statute of limitations. In Paris, people usually conform to the little prejudices and customs of

the coterie to which they belong ; and in determining a point too trivial to be submitted to the mighty test of “right or wrong?” refer it to the preference of those with whom they live in habits of intimacy. But this never appears the case in my own country. An Englishman observes on every petty occasion, “I make it a rule,”—“it is my invariable custom,”—“nothing should induce me to, &c.” He lives up to a theory in the choice of his great coat ; and acts upon fixed principles in the colour of his coach horses ;—regulates his servants’ hall on the system of Say—and will not pass a bill without three readings, and a family committee. Even his egotism assumes a parliamentary tone.

January 5.—Providence be thanked, Bagot has this moment arrived from his uncle’s seat in Hertfordshire ; I shall no longer be condemned to ride, drive, and walk, in solitary sulkiness along the tedious avenues of brick, whose aristocratic dulness incessantly reminds one of the pride with which the most com-

mercial nation in the world repudiates all association with the outward and visible signs of trade. A shop introduced into a street ensures its desecration; and the value of houses is trebly increased where “no thoroughfare,” can be set forth in recommendation.

It would be impossible to produce any thing more satisfactorily expetive of the increase of coroners’ inquests during the winter months in London, than the gloomy aspect of one of the streets devoted to “genteel residences,”—losing its northward prospect among the fogs of the New Road, its southern amid the smother of May Fair; with rows of narrow blinking windows, obscured by filthy muslin curtains and still dingier draperies of heavy damask, or closed in announcement of the predilection of their owner for the biting breezes of his country-seat; the walls smeared and darkened by soot,—the offices plunged dungeon-like into the depths of the earth, in fetid contact with the common and uncommon sewers. Such is the house which John

Bull boasts as his castle; such the caverns which these railers at negro slavery apportion to their luckless domestics. “*C'est pire que les anthropophages!*” exclaimed Ebène this morning, when he described to me the damp and dreary subterraneous chamber devoted to the use of my servants. “*Pour être mangé, pourvu que la sauce fût bonne, je saurois m'y soumettre; mais me faire enterrer vif!—Je n'y tiens pas!*” As to Ludwig, he has been luxuriating in a porter-butt ever since his arrival; beer and tobacco afford a universal panacea for German miseries.

January 5.—How provoking!—Bagot is again off for the country.—He assures me that Christmas is the season of the year allotted by fashion for the indulgence of rural predilections; and that nothing but huge sea-coal fires and a deep snow reconcile the members of the *beau-monde* to the sight of their woods and lawns. Hosts of idlers assemble in these country mansions, ostensibly for the purpose of hunting and shooting;

but in reality for the same motives which unite them in town—to flirt with other men's wives, and other men's daughters,—devour other men's venison,—and criticise other men's wine; the said fathers and husbands being buried, in the interim, full fathom five in philosophy:—reading or manufacturing political pamphlets, which have been re-manufactured, re-read, and re-committed to oblivion at least two thousand times since the epoch of the Rump Parliament,—being susceptible of adaptation to each trimestral crisis, periodically agonizing the British empire. It appears that there is always a distillery or a *habeas corpus* bill—a corn law, or a canon law, necessary to endanger the constitution; in the discussion of which powdered heads are shaken, buttons held, and hustings mobbed with as much earnestness, as if the great march of mankind could be retarded by their influence, more than by the obstruction of an atom of sand.

Bagot, it seems, is both by station and accident of high account in these Christmas coteries.

Young, handsome, rich, intelligent, and his own master, he is super-endowed with the attraction of being fresh from Paris, with the last nothings of the best society sparkling on his lips; and the most expert hand at a proverb or a charade, who ever improvisated the finesse of Scribe. Moreover, he dances the mazurka like Taglioni *en pantalon*; and is withal the best humoured companion and most animated guest ever vouchsafed to a country-house.

What will become of me till his return?—He offered to take me with him to Lord Romford's, and promised me the smiles of her ladyship's two daughters, as an incitement to the journey; but it would not suit my present views to be smuggled into society in that sort of free and easy style. Till last night, I was only known to Sir Henry Bagot as the Baron von Elzstein, a friend of his friend, young Adelberg; and I should not even desire him to take my actual station upon trust and present me to others, till my new honours have received ample authenti-

cation. He tells me that Lady Neville and Cecilia will not return to England before Easter; but by that time I trust I shall find myself properly established in this fastidious metropolis. Mrs. Perceval, courted and *répandue* as she is, must not see me lounging away my days in a dull hotel, or driven to a still duller theatre for my evening's amusement.

“Aha! Adrian, my friend!—a little touch of the pride of the house of Maldyn?” As if it were possible for Elzbach and Göttingen to afford me credentials to the elect of London society! But then Cecilia knows nothing of my connexion with these places. In Paris it was my fortune to meet her where Baron Elzstein was warmly welcomed as the friend of Count Pignatelli, and the companion of Sir Henry Bagot; nor has she a conception that there exists a class,—a *presentable* class of men and women,—beyond the pale of that exclusive circle in which she has lived, and moved, and had her being. Dearest Cecilia! the fanciful

but *naïve* coquette that other women are from affectation, *she* is by nature,—by ineffaceable and changeless nature; steady only in caprice, and consistent only in inconsistency. Yet how charming amid all her faults! Last night, in speaking of her, Bagot compared her to a comet: whose brilliant irregularities are scrutable only by the eye of wisdom, and a matter of vulgar terror to the crowd. Yet not to the vulgar alone: I am convinced that even my father would listen with alarm to Cecilia's sallies. Were not those lips so beautiful in the archness of their expression,—but I will not permit myself to rhapsodize in this matter-of-fact journal!

It appears that Pignatelli *accompanied* them to Naples. Surely Lady Neville cannot be so blind as to remain in ignorance of his attachment; and if so, what are they all about? Well, well!—'tis no affair of mine; twelve weeks—thirteen weeks—(let me see, when does Easter fall this year?)—will make me fully acquainted

with the affair. Till then, I will think and dream of Cecilia—as little as I can help!

January 6.—Do I dine at home to-day? inquires the supercilious waiter; and though it is clearly for mine host's advantage that I should drop into his apartments friendless as if from the skies or Baffin's Bay, I see they are beginning to think it odd I have so few visitors and pay so few visits. In spite of my father's warning, I fancy I must throw away some hundreds to show them I am not an adventurer; I detected one of the fellows in a very close scrutiny of the bank-note for which I requested change this morning.

Twelve o'clock. Again returned from that huge wilderness called a patent theatre; and again I say, why was I destined to visit London when all London is out of town; when skating on the Serpentine is the order of the day, and pantomimes the order of the night? It is the custom here to dine at seven, and to go to the play at half-past six; an economy of time and place

hardly compassable by mortal ingenuity. I arrived at Covent Garden at eight, and not having dreamed of securing a private box, found some difficulty in getting a seat on a back row; where on a hard and narrow bench, a fat wheezing old gentleman to my right, and a tall ungainly young one, buttoned to the chin, on the left, promised little for my local advantages. The asthmatical heavings of the one formed a bad addition to a detestable orchestra, without being sufficiently powerful to drown the discordances of the worst *corps d'opera* that ever blundered through the enchantments of *Figaro*. We had a Barber who did not sing, a Countess who could not, a Susanna who should not, and a little sulky Page who would not; a bass who growled like a polar bear, and a tenor that squeaked like a broken-winded bag-pipe. Their efforts were prodigiously applauded by the galleries, who probably exercised their hands in this manner to promote circulation, for the house was filled with a chilly orange-

coloured fog, obscuring even the glare of the gas-lights, and throwing the opposite boxes into a total eclipse. I hazarded a single remark to the well-buttoned young gentleman; who instantly drew in the skirts of his coat and the corners of his mouth, elevated his eyebrows and froze me by a monosyllable. And after witnessing with admiration the prodigious extent of histrionic fortitude in the quantity of thumps and bumps endured to the tune of an Irish jig during five acts of a pantomime, I returned home with a headache, to ponder over the degradation of the drama in the country of Shakspeare; and to drown my irritation of mind and body in a warm bath and a draught of Seltzer water. So much for a patent theatre! "They manage these things better in France!" Ay! and in Germany. People there are less self-engrossed and more disposed to the sympathies of dramatic excitement. They button themselves less sturdily within their broadcloth, both literally and figuratively.

January 8.—More frost,—more fog,—more

cold,—more coughs,—more dreariness,—more desolation ! And yet how little has the climate we damn so unceremoniously for all these delinquencies to do with the business ! At Vienna, the air from the Gallician mountains and the Danube is fifty-degrees keener ; and during a whole winter, there are not twenty days in which the spire of St. Stephen's is not enveloped in mist. Yet how cheerful the city !—how gay the sledge parties, the balls, and all the varying dissipations of the carnival !—Notwithstanding the influence of the season, society forms a still intenser focus, and gathers itself into a cordial mass, defying the rigour of the atmosphere, and the still harsher inclemency of human asperity. If union be the basis of strength, it is also the origin of warmth ; the very name of a solitary winter makes one's teeth chatter !

Meriton, the family agent, seems a good sort of vulgar man, neither so intelligent nor so high-minded as I have the prejudice to expect in

every one connected with my father. It appears that he derives a large income from what is called "a good parliamentary business," and is a capital hand at jobbing with corporations, and cheapening boroughs. By this means he occasionally occupies a seat in the house as a man of straw, till a customer presents himself. Notwithstanding these senatorial honours, he appears to affix much importance to his connexion with our family; and is most fussily gracious to myself. Yesterday I accompanied him to call on my father's banker; a man of family, fortune, and fashion.

The bankers of this country, by the way, belong to a higher sphere of society than those of the continent; a circumstance which naturally renders them far less serviceable to travellers. Here, it would be considered officious to interfere with a stranger's modes of amusement; and admissions to casinos and galleries, or introductions to public or private institutions, are as little likely to be offered to a

foreigner, as they are to be withheld from an Englishman of respectability in any continental city. Yet in London they become doubly necessary; for the clubs which engulph the idlers about town are of course accessible only after long probation; and society—so called—is surrounded by barriers permeable only by the aid of certain talismans, rare and valuable as the spells which cleave asunder the magic caverns of Caucasus.

But to return to the banker, and his friend the agent,—which I am in no hurry to do. Mr. Meriton has favoured me with an enormous card of invitation for a dinner at his house in Hanover Square, this day three weeks! And the brute is perfectly aware I have not half a dozen acquaintances in the metropolis, and am passing every evening alone in an hotel!—Three weeks hence!—By that time parliament will have met, the town will be full, a revolution may possibly have occurred, and certainly a thaw; and I shall be independent of his superfluous

hospitality. This is what is called "giving a dinner;" why could not he ask me to eat a cutlet with him without ceremony to-day?—He inquired, with a formal smile, what I thought of London; aware all the while that I know nothing of it beyond the desolate vacuity of its long, straight, monotonous, unpicturesque streets; dumpish and heavy and smoke-weazened as a middle-aged Dutchman!

The lighter business of life is carried on here with the regularity of a counting-house. People would not for the world be amused except at given hours and appointed seasons; nor can they be persuaded that a pleasure is lawfully their own, unless duly entered into the day-book and ledger. Dancing becomes a sin every Wednesday night, unless at one particular house, in one particular street,—a certain club called Almack's; and although Pasta may be heard three times a week during the season, it is only pardonable to listen to her on a Tuesday or a Saturday night. A life thus burthened with the weight of prejudices and formalities,

becomes as heavy in its course as a broad-wheeled waggon. Oh! for the light calash of Paris,—or the rapid britschka of Vienna!

January 10.—Letters from my father;—well, thank Heaven, and cheerful! He assures me that the Manningsfields are enchanted with the prospect of my visit; and advises me to go down at once to Derbyshire, and remain there till the meeting of parliament and the consequent re-animation of London. But no!—I have not yet made myself acquainted with a thousandth part of the wonders of this mighty metropolis; and though the sight of its busy multitudes renders me peevishly sensitive to my own isolation, I have no inclination to undervalue its prodigies, animate and inanimate. Like some prodigious sea-monster, whose bulk renders its motion imperceptible, its very stillness is awful!—I am anxious, too, to get over my traveller's curiosity, and acquaint myself with every thing deserving investigation previous to Lady Neville's return to England. I remember

Cecilia once assured me that among the English nothing is considered more raw and ridiculous in good society than a thirst for information; that a man of the world would disown with indignation having visited any public monument of his own country, though punctilious in paying his respects to every cork model, or troop of dancing dogs, imported from the Continent. I will therefore stay here, and acquire, previous to her return, a familiarity with all that it is necessary to know, and all that it is necessary to leave unknown.

How can it be that this dingy city produces such a host of poets and romancers?—For my own part, I own it has exercised a most fortunate influence over my mind, by numbing into torpor the excitement arising from my father's extraordinary revelations. Had I remained in Germany, I might have found it difficult to throw off the ghastly terrors with which our family misfortunes had possessed me; but I am now only surprised how such impassioned im-

pulses could have arisen in a country of rail-roads, steam-engines, muffins, and brown stout. Never was there a land so unpropitious to the development of sentiment; and, as to the loftier emotions of the soul, I conceive them to be wholly incompatible with the customs of the nation.

Think of a family pursued by the wrath of Nemesis, in a kingdom scoured by the wheels of omnibuses and two-horse stages, buggies, and tax-carts! I blush to own that for a moment I was so staggered by my father's narrative, as to have lauded my stars I had made Cecilia's acquaintance, as Adrian von Elzstein, and not under the fatal name of Maldyn; but a fortnight passed in this anti-romantic region of traffic and barter, hackney-coaches and patent medicine-shops, has effectually cured me. The Destinies, who weave their thread of life with a patent Oxford-street spinning-wheel, are in my estimation as unpoetical as any old dames who pick lint in a parish poor-house.

January 12.—At length my dear Gustavus has made his appearance ; and this great wilderness of desolate splendour, this mass of breathing existence, will henceforward assume a new character in my eyes. How delightful to be enabled to welcome, with hand and heart, the friend whose hospitality rendered Hanover my home ; and whose partiality sufficed to acquire me so many friends during that memorable month at Paris. In the house of Adelberg's father I have lived as a son ; and Gustavus shall be as a brother in mine.

One of the most charming points in his character, is the perfect singleness of heart with which he either accepts or confers a favour. The alternative is pretty nearly indistinct to his perceptions ; he is aware of a feeling of general satisfaction, and is indifferent whether it proceed from generosity or gratitude, from the pleasure of giving or receiving. In the midst of his declarations of joy at this sudden change in my worldly prospects, he observed, “ And it

must delight so you to be enabled to prove your friendship to Pignatelli, Bagot, and the rest of us!" I doubt whether there exists an Englishman who would not have been afraid of incurring the deductions which might be drawn from such an observation; but Adelberg is as incapable of apprehending, as of cherishing an illiberal inference; the cultivation of his mind, which is of no common order, has done nothing towards fencing his honest heart against the rubs and knaveries of mankind. I often fancy that my father in his youth, must have resembled Gustavus Adelberg.

It is impossible to imagine two persons more different than my friends Gustavus and Pignatelli. The old prince has so long maintained his post at the British court, and Anastasio was so young at their arrival here, that his English education has done as much towards tempering his hot Calabrian blood, as my residence in Germany towards the condensation of my natural phlegm; if *I* am to be admitted as

only half an Englishman, I am satisfied Pignatelli is less than a quarter of an Italian. His naturally fervid temper and acute understanding have subsided into a humorous tone in London—a satirical vein in Paris; while his causticity is still tempered by the gracious urbanity of his Neapolitan courtliness. I wish he were here again; or rather I wish he had never revisited his native country. Pignatelli is the very last companion I could desire for Cecilia. All her faults are his own; and he has the art of rendering them so attractive, that with his example and popularity before her eyes, I have little hope of a change in her modes of thinking and feeling. Perhaps I should say *of talking*; for who can guess what a woman really thinks or feels?

How strange that here, even here in my native country, Adelberg should have better means of forwarding my views in society than lie at my own disposal! The position of Baron Adelberg at the Hanoverian court has enabled

him to provide his son with introductions such as will immediately place him in the vortex; and the personal endowments of Gustavus are of a nature to do them ample justice. But, how German to the heart's core! No sooner had he installed himself in his new apartments, than he commenced his inquiries touching the operas, orchestras, concerts, composers, leaders, fiddlers, and pianists, who were likely to render life endurable during his sojourn in London. Adelberg has scarcely an idea of measuring his time except by crotchets and quavers; or of the value of notes, except those of the chromatic scale. He began questioning me concerning the "great leader;" and when I replied in the belief that the premier was the object of his curiosity, I discovered him to allude to John Cramer; the "great English composer," whom I naturally concluded to be Sir Walter, turned out to be Henry Bishop;—and Spagnoletti and Mori appear as much objects of interest and curiosity to him, as Croker or Lord Holland to

myself. Scandalized to find that this mighty metropolis boasts at present no national opera, he has persuaded me to engage a box for the season at the King's Theatre; a spot which is hallowed ground in my estimation, from the circumstance that within its walls twenty years ago occurred my first interview with my father! In another week it will open; and we have the promise of a sufficient variety of musical wonders to afford the strongest stimulus to Adelberg's curiosity.

Among others whom Adelberg's diplomatic introductions have already brought here in return, is Lord Brabazon, the Nestor of the antediluvian world of dandies; a man who has wasted his life, dissipated his fortune, and lavished his feelings, in as laborious a search after frivolity as ever bewildered the mind of the merest ass translated from Eton to Oxford, from Oxford to St. James's-street. He has bestowed as much time on the instruction of his tailor as might have rendered him an able

statesman ; and as much money on the building of carriages as would have constructed a mansion on his English estates, or a village on his Irish ones. But his experience of the world—the great world which is in fact the least of all possible worlds,—has not been thrown away. Brabazon is *par excellence* the micrometer of fashionable life ; the great philosopher of petty science. While other learned men have been rewarded by the discovery of a new gas, or the decipherment of the Rosetta stone, *he* has gratified himself by the invention of a new linchpin, and the substitution of some inexplicable chemical compound for starch.

Harry Crawford, his *double*, is a fellow of another caliber. Finding himself born to the sorry inheritance of a younger brother, he renounced on his first entrance into life, all the powers and capabilities of a noun-substantive ; and descended into an adjectitious condition for the remainder of his days. Not Charles the emperor, in his abdication of sovereignty, per-

formed a more heroic act of self-spoliation than Harry Crawford in the resignation of his freewill and nominative powers. He gave up the command of his five senses,—and no longer sees, hears, or tastes except at the instigation of his patron for the time being;—he has no memory unless it be refreshed by *his* suggestions;—no anticipations, unless the future be distinctly propounded by *his* discernment. He is in fact a mere secondary animal actuated by the soul of his lordship of Brabazon; whom he renders as much a quadruped, as if he walked on four noble legs; and endows with a bifold sense of all that is to be seen or heard in the world.

So much for Lord Brabazon and his shadow; than whom two pleasanter companions, or more accomplished in the arts of London-life, exist not throughout its ninety-three clubs, or nine hundred and ninety-three coteries. They are just returned from a visit to the Romfords; and relate wonders of Bagot's success in society, and of the attractions of Lady Romford's circle. It seems

that her ladyship has been its solitary centre for the last thirty years, and is far from willing to resign the post to the beautiful Lady Charlevilles, her daughters; and Bagot, who has been till now a votary of this setting sun of a day that is past, is just beginning to fancy the rosy dawn may not be wholly unworthy his notice. Lady Clara Charleville it seems is the object which detains him at Romford Park.

Next week, however, parliament will meet; and as Adelberg invariably adds,—next week the Opera will open;—and thenceforward something will be going on in London. The great sea-monster will begin to lash its tail, and we shall all share its reanimation.”

END OF VOL. I.



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